

ESSENTIAL MIND TRAINING

Tibetan Wisdom for Daily Life

Translated, edited, and introduced by Thupten Jinpa



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Preface

ESSENTIAL MIND TRAINING is the first publication in a new series called Tibetan Classics, which presents accessible soft-cover editions of translations of seminal Tibetan Buddhist works excerpted from the larger, hardcover volumes of The Library of Tibetan Classics. The original volume from which this particular anthology is drawn is Mind Training: The Great Collection, which I had the privilege to translate into English. Mind training, or lojong, is a method for transforming our habitual self-focus into a more compassionate and altruistic way of life, and it gives me great joy to be able to help present this cherished practice to a wider audience.

This selection of eighteen essential texts of the mind training tradition is accompanied by an essay in the form of an introduction, short explanations for each section of the book, explanatory endnotes, as well a glossary to assist the reader with key terms. All of these seek to provide useful context—about authorship, central themes, and historical background—to allow the reader to engage with the texts in a deeper and more meaningful way.

I would like to express my deep gratitude, first and foremost, to my two teachers, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, for being such a shining examplar of the Tibetan tradition, and Kyabjé Zemé Rinpoché, for embodying the spirit of Tibetan mind training teachings and introducing me to its wonderful world. My heartfelt thanks also go out to Barry J. Hershey, Connie

Hershey, and the Hershey Family Foundation, whose support enabled me to undertake the translation of the texts in this volume. I also want to thank Pierre and Pamela Omidyar, who, through a special grant, allowed me to develop this particular volume for a general readership.

Let me also take this opportunity to offer profound thanks to Nita Ing and the Ing Foundation and Eric Colombel and the Tsadra Foundation for their ongoing support of translating multiple volumes from *The Library of Tibetan Classics*. I would also like to thank David Kittelstrom, our longtime editor at Wisdom Publications on the classics series, whose incisive editing always makes my English look better than it actually is; Tim McNeill and his team at Wisdom Publications, for their dedication to excellence; and last but not least my wife Sophie Boyer Langri, for her unwavering support and patience in the face of my never-ending work related to classical Tibetan culture.

Thupten Jinpa Montreal, 2011

Introduction

WITHIN THE VAST body of Tibetan spiritual literature, one genre stands out for its inspirational power, universality, and down-to-earth practicality, qualities that have made these teachings dear to the Tibetan people for generations. I am referring to a collection of texts and their associated contemplative practices known simply as *lojong*, or "mind training," which first appeared in the land of snows almost a millennium ago. At its heart the Tibetan mind training teachings represent a profound celebration of the spiritual ideal of genuine altruism, a deeply felt compassion for all beings and a dedication to serve their welfare. This is an ideal shared across many of world's great spiritual and humanistic traditions. By the twelfth century *lojong* had become a most cherished spiritual heritage on the vast Tibetan plateau, with attendant myths and legends associated with its origin and development.

Today, as interest in Tibetan spiritual teaching and insights grows worldwide, often it's the mind training teachings that are most shared with the larger world by Tibetan teachers. I vividly remember the beautiful morning of August 15, 1999, when nearly a hundred thousand people from all walks of life gathered in New York's Central Park to listen to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's exposition of *Eight Verses on Mind Training*. As on many of the Dalai Lama's trips, on that day I had the privilege to sit beside him as his official translator, and on this occasion, the beauty and simplicity of these eight short verses brought a

special power and poignancy to the event. The atmosphere was pervaded by a stillness of attention, deep spiritual presence, and a shared experience of warmth toward all things living, and those present felt—at least for an hour and a half—that they had touched something deep within themselves.² Three years later the Dalai Lama returned once again to Central Park, and that time he chose to teach Atisa's *Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland* to a gathering whose size exceeded even the previous meeting. Both of these seminal mind training texts are featured in the present volume.

In my own life, I have been fortunate to be exposed to the mind training teachings from an early age and have, for more than three decades now, recited the Tibetan teacher Langri Thangpa's Eight Verses of Mind Training on a daily basis. The story of Langri Thangpa's single-pointed contemplation of the suffering of all beings, even to the point of acquiring the nickname the "one with a tearful face," and how he came to befriend the wild animals living around his retreat imprinted in me an intuitive affinity with the Kadam lineage, which is associated with the emergence of lojong teaching. As a young monk, I would daydream of the idyllic scene where, as an old hermit, I would feed grass to the wild animals that would be living around my hut in some remote mountainous wilderness.

My own personal teacher at Ganden Monastery, Kyabjé Zemé Rinpoché, at whose house I had the honor to live as a monk student, was a great embodiment and master of mind training. While I was deeply immersed in the study of intricate philosophical views that was part of our regular curriculum, every now and then, Rinpoché would remind me of the critical need to be grounded in everyday reality and the need to never be disconnected from contemplating others' welfare. He would stress that, at the end of day, it's the teaching of *lojong* that helps

us make the insights and wisdom of the Buddha a reality in our own lives.

On several occasions I was also able to witness at first hand the power of mind training practice to engender courage and resilience in ordinary individuals. A neighbor of mine at the monastery, an ordinary monk, suffered a debilitating skin condition that produced thick scabs on the surface of his skin, which would harden and then crack open. In the heat of the South Indian summer, he had to avoid, as far as possible, any contact between two skin surfaces, such as around the armpits and behind the knees. Though his pain and discomfort were severe, this monk, as a mind training practitioner, always maintained a tranquil and happy state of mind. This capacity to greet life's difficulties with calm and joy is one of the key indicators of success in training the mind.

In fact, there is a saying attributed to the Kadam lineage masters that the best measure of our spiritual development is how we relate to death when our final day arrives. Those most advanced in their spiritual development will face their mortality with joy; those of medium development will do so without fear. Even the least developed, we are told, should ensure that they approach their final day without any regrets.

Having spent the first three decades of my life in India, a major portion of that in the Tibetan monasteries, I was privileged to see this "measure" of spiritual development in operation. The grace and calm, the note of true freedom in their ability to let go, and the genuine lack of remorse, borne of the awareness that they have done their best while alive—these are some of the characteristic qualities of the state of mind I observed in many of the senior monks, including my own personal teacher, as they approached their own mortality. Even today, when I think of these examples of what some might call

"graceful exits," the words that come easiest to mind are serenity, dignity, and grace.

The Meaning and Origins of Mind Training

The Tibetan term *lojong* is composed of two syllables. *Lo* stands for "mind," "thought," or "attitudes," while *jong* connotes several interrelated but distinct meanings. First, *jong* can refer to *training* whereby one acquires a skill or masters a field of knowledge. *Jong* can also connote *habituation* or familiarization with specific ways of being and thinking. Third, *jong* can refer to the *cultivation* of specific mental qualities, such as universal compassion or the awakening mind. Finally, *jong* can connote *cleansing* or purification, as in purifying one's mind of craving, hatred, and delusion.

All these different meanings carry the salient idea of transformation, whereby a process of training, habituation, cultivation, and cleansing induces a kind of metanoesis, from the ordinary deluded state, whose modus operandi is self-centeredness, to a fundamentally changed perspective of enlightened, other-centeredness. Today, thanks to research on neuroplasticity, we have a much better appreciation of the brain's capacity for transformation and change.

Broadly speaking, all the teachings of the Buddha can be characterized as "mind training" in the senses described above. However, the genre called *mind training* or *lojong* refers to specific approaches for cultivating the *awakening mind*—the altruistic aspiration to seek full awakening for the benefit of all beings—especially through the practice of equalizing and exchanging of self and others as found in Śāntideva's eighthcentury classic, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.⁴

Two famous short works of the Tibetan mind training genre are today well known to the English-speaking world, with

numerous commentaries by contemporary Tibetan teachers. These are Langri Thangpa's *Eight Verses on Mind Training* and Chekawa's *Seven-Point Mind Training*, both of which are contained in the present volume together with translations of their earliest commentaries.⁵

Traditional Tibetan sources identify the Indian Bengali master Atiśa (982–1054) to be the source of *lojong* in Tibet. Judging by currently available literature, the early origins of mind training as a separate genre of texts and spiritual practice appear to lie in the varied pithy instructions Atiśa may have given individually to many of his disciples. These instructions came to be later compiled under the rubric of "root lines on mind training," thus forming the basis for the emergence of subsequent *lojong* literature.

A well-known legend associated with the emergence of the *lojong* teachings is Atiśa's sea voyage to the Indonesian island of Sumatra, where he went to seek the instruction on "mind training" from Serlingpa. It is from him Atiśa is said to have received the profound instruction on the techniques of "equalizing and exchanging self and others," which entails a disciplined process aimed at radically transforming our thoughts, prejudices, and habits from self-centeredness to other-centered altruism. Years later, in Tibet, whenever Atiśa uttered his teacher Serlingpa's name, it is said, he would instinctively fold his palms together in homage with tears in his eyes. "Whatever degree of kind heart I possess," he is reputed to have exclaimed, "this is due entirely to my teacher Serlingpa." Such was the depth of Atiśa's gratitude for having received the mind training instructions.

In tracing the immediate source of the Seven-Point Mind Training, there is a memorable passage in a thirteenth-century work that describes a brief exchange between two Kadam masters, Chekawa (1101–75), the author of the Seven-Point, and his

teacher Sharawa. Having been intrigued by the powerful altruistic sentiments expressed in Langri Thangpa's Eight Verses—such as "May I accept upon myself the defeat / and offer to others the victory"—Chekawa asks Sharawa whether these teachings have a scriptural basis. The teacher then cites some stanzas from Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland and asks if there is anyone who does not accept the authority of Nāgārjuna.⁷ This story is often repeated in later literature. According to Chekawa, several sutras and early Indian treatises stand out as the primary sources of mind training teachings, but the most important are undoubtedly Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland and Sāntideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life.

The present book contains the seminal Tibetan works on mind training extracted from *Mind Training: The Great Collection*, the earliest known anthology of this genre. I had the privilege to bring a translation of the complete anthology to the English-speaking world, and it gives me great pleasure to be able to present here the most seminal and inspiring works from within that collection.

Key Features of Mind Training

There is no denying that, historically, the mind training teachings evolved in the context of Buddhist practitioners whose primary goal is to seek enlightenment, in fact buddhahood, for the benefit of all beings—the highest aspiration of a Mahayana Buddhist. And the mind training instructions and practices were recognized by many such aspirants to be a highly effective set of contemplative practices to achieve this end. In addition, it was those meditators who were single-pointedly dedicated to the pursuit of full awakening who found these instructions to be a source of deep inspiration and personal transformation. One need only recall such examples as the story of the "three

Kadam brothers"—Potowa, Chengawa, and Phuchungwa; the ever-weeping Langri Thangpa; Chekawa, the teacher of the lepers; Ben Gungyal, the famed robber turned hermit; and Shawo Gangpa, who inscribed self-exhortation lines on the posts he erected in the four cardinal directions around his meditation hut.

This said, as the history of mind training testifies, much of the popularity and success of mind training teachings lie in their universality, their relevance to the everyday lives of people from all walks of life, not just serious meditators. Furthermore, since the order in which the various aspects of mind training are enacted depends principally on where we are as spiritual aspirants, as the early *lojong* teachers would say, there is something in mind training practice for everyone.

A central theme of mind training practice is the profound reorientation of our basic attitude toward both our own self and fellow sentient beings, as well as toward the events we experience. In our current naïve everyday attitude, we not only grasp at an intrinsically real "self" as being who we truly are, we also cherish this "me" at the expense of all others. We feel hurt when someone insults us, disappointed when someone we love betrays us, outraged when provoked for no reason, pangs of jealousy when others are successful, and all of these tend to strike us more intensely the stronger our self-cherishing.

The mind training teaching challenges us to question this. By deeply understanding others as friends "more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel"—as Langri Thangpa puts it in his *Eight Verses on Mind Training*—and recognizing that our true enemy lies inside ourselves, we overturn our habitual self-centeredness. It is self-cherishing that opens us to painful and undesirable experiences. Mind training teachings admonish us to instead "Banish all blame to the single source. / Toward all beings contemplate their kindness."

This somewhat paradoxical instruction that if we truly cherish our own happiness, we must seek the welfare of others captures a powerful insight into our human condition. Whether in the domain of our relationships, our sense of purpose in life, or our overall degree of contentment, today researchers are increasingly telling us that what matters most is a basic feeling of connection with others and a need to care for others' well-being. In other words, modern research seems to be telling us the simple truth that excessive self-centeredness is costly, in terms of both our own personal happiness and our relationships with others and the world around us. The moral of these findings is clear: All of us, those who care for our own well-being, need to shift our basic attitude and move closer to a stance rooted in caring for others.

As an important step toward this other-centeredness, the mind training masters admonish us to view our fellow beings not with rivalry and antagonism but rather with a feeling of gratitude. We cultivate this feeling of appreciation regardless of whether others mean to be kind to us or not, for the fact is that we owe everything in our life to others. From birth to basic survival, from simple joys of eating a meal to a deeper sense of contentment, in every way, the presence of others is indispensable. Today, research on happiness increasingly points to the truth of this basic *lojong* teaching.

One of mind training's most evocative contributions to world spirituality is the practice of *tonglen*, or "giving and taking." *Tonglen* is a seemingly simple meditation practice of giving away one's own happiness and good fortune to others and taking upon oneself their suffering and misfortune. The meditation is meant to enhance loving-kindness and compassion. In mind training, this practice is combined with our breathing, whereby when we breathe in, we imagine taking from all other beings their pain and misfortune, relieving them of all their

negative traits and behaviors—visualized as streams of dark clouds, as smoke, or as brackish water—entering our body. These become like an antibody, attacking the virus of excessive self-centeredness. Then, when we exhale, we imagine giving to others all our happiness and good fortune, as well as our virtuous traits and behaviors. These are visualized as white clouds, bright lights, or streams of nectar, radiating from us and entering the bodies of other beings, bringing them joy and calm. The *Seven-Point Mind Training* presents this practice most succinctly: "Train alternately in giving and taking; / place the two astride your breath."

In Tibet lamas often would advise their disciples, especially if they happened to fall ill, to focus on tonglen meditation. The idea is to seize the opportunity presented by your sickness to recognize the universality of suffering and creatively use misfortune to reflect on others' suffering. You might cultivate the thought, "May my suffering serve to spare others from similar experiences in the future." Imagining that you are taking upon yourself the same illness afflicting many others right at that moment, you imagine that you thereby spare them from their illness.

So tonglen practice helps you to be courageous in the face of suffering while at the same time empathically connecting with the suffering of others. This is a beautiful spiritual practice, which practitioners of other faiths, such as Christianity, or even of no faith, can easily incorporate into everyday life. Indeed, that is happening in many parts of the world today.8

Since a key goal of mind training is the radical transformation of our thoughts and habits, remedies for the various ills of the mind are a dominant feature of these teachings. To begin with, as the instruction "Purify whatever is coarsest first" puts it, there is the practical advice to tackle our most glaring mental afflictions first. Then comes the admonition to "overcome

all errors through a single means," namely the cultivation of compassion.

In addition, we find the crucial injunction to ensure the purity both of our initial motivation and of our state of mind upon concluding an action. The *Seven-Point Mind Training* expresses this injunction as "There are two tasks—one at the start and one at the end."

Finally, we are advised to make our own self the primary witness to our thoughts and actions presented in the line "Of the two witnesses, uphold the primary one." A witness here means a kind of overseer, someone watching to make sure we do not go astray. If we rely only on others to be witnesses to our conduct, there will be occasions when we have no witness. And even if others are watching us, it is not always easy for them to gauge the internal states driving our actions. In contrast, we can never escape from ourselves. More importantly, if we can establish a positive self-image, then every time we encounter a situation that tempts us to behave in a way that is contrary to our self-image, we will recognize such conduct to be unbecoming and reject it. Being a witness unto ourselves in this way can be a most effective means of guarding against destructive tendencies.

If, after all of this, we fail to recognize that the ultimate nature of all things is without substantial reality, and we continue to fall prey to self-grasping, we are advised to learn to view all things from their ultimate perspective, as dreamlike. Given our deeply ingrained tendency to reify—to project concrete reality on to—anything we deem worthy of attention, once our remedies for self-cherishing prove successful, we risk grasping at the remedies themselves and finding ourselves still in bondage to mental afflictions. So we are told, "The remedy, too, is to be freed in its own place."

On the spiritual path we meet all kinds of circumstances,

both positive and negative. To be successful, we need a way to remain steadfast in the face of difficulties. In this, the mind training teachings excel brilliantly. The *Seven-Point Mind Training* puts it this way: "When the world and its inhabitants are filled with negativity, / transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment." Say we are slandered by someone with no justifiable basis; we can see the situation as a precious opportunity to cultivate forbearance. If we are attacked by someone, we can view the assailant with compassion, seeing that he is possessed by the demon of anger.

The masters of the mind training teachings extend this principle to all possible situations. They speak of taking onto the path both good luck and bad, both joy and pain, both wealth and poverty. In a beautiful stanza, the Kashmiri master Śākyaśrī, who came to Tibet at the beginning of the thirteenth century, writes:

When happy I will dedicate my virtues to all; may benefit and happiness pervade all of space! When suffering I will take on the pains of all beings; may the ocean of suffering become dry!

When we as spiritual practitioners learn to relate to all events in this radically transformed manner, we will possess something akin to the philosopher's stone, able to transform every circumstance or event, whether positive or negative, into a condition conducive to enhancing altruism. No wonder the early mind training masters compare this teaching to an indestructible diamond, to the all-powerful sun, and to the mythological wishgranting tree. If we lived our lives according to the principles of mind training as instructed by the great masters of the tradition, we could easily relate to the sentiments of Chekawa:

Because of multiple aspirations, I have defied the tragic tale of suffering and have taken instructions to subdue self-grasping; now, even if I die, I have no remorse.

One of the central themes running throughout the mind training instructions—whether it is cultivating gratitude for others' presence, or recognizing how self-destructive obsessive self-centeredness is, or transforming adversities into opportunities, or being one's own principal witness—is the notion of genuine courage. This is not a courage based in foolhardiness; rather, it is a courage rooted in a clear understanding of the complexity that is our human condition. Instead of adopting a simple stoic approach to life's inevitable sufferings, lojong instructions show us a different path, a way that each of us can become more connected with and caring for the complex, messy, entangled web that is the deeply interconnected world of sentient beings. The mind training teachings show us a remarkable way, whereby while maintaining courage in our immediate personal concerns, we also remain totally connected with the needs and concerns of others and learn to relate to every event from such a compassionate standpoint. This is a fine balance. The vision is this: a carefree mind rooted in a deep joy. The following stanza attributed to Atisa captures this quality succinctly:

He who sees as spiritual teachers the objects that engender afflictions be they enemy or friend will remain content wherever he is.¹⁰

For me, and perhaps for many others too, one of the greatest attractions of the mind training teachings is their earthy practi-

cality. Unlike many other established teachings of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, such as the rigorously systematic approach of the stages of the path teachings, the somewhat mystical approach of *mahāmudrā* and *dzokchen* teachings, or the highest yoga tantric meditations, with their ritualized deity visualizations, the mind training teachings are down to earth. In fact, the masters of mind training extol its simplicity, lack of systematic organization, and unadorned pith.

Mind training is not ostentatious, but it is nonetheless very powerful. Even a single line can be said to encapsulate the entire teaching of the Buddha, in that a single line has the power to subdue self-cherishing and the mental afflictions. Unlike other teachings, mind training has no complicated structure, no confusing outlines, and it requires no complex philosophical reasoning. From their earliest stages, the mind training teachings became a shared heritage of all the Tibetan Buddhist schools.

There is a wonderful story about how mind training teaching became public in the early stages of its development. The thirteenth-century master Sangyé Gompa speaks of how Chekawa shared the mind training instructions first with individuals suffering from leprosy. Public censure of lepers was apparently a major social issue in central Tibet at the time, and Kadam teachers were deeply concerned about this. Legend has it that even Dromtönpa himself, one of the founding fathers of the Kadam school, devoted the latter part of his life to nursing lepers and eventually became himself a victim of the disease. As word spread about the mind training teaching within the leper community, more and more lepers gathered to hear Chekawa's teaching and engage in the practice, such that the teaching came to be referred to as "teaching for the lepers."11 Perhaps it was the mind training instructions on how to rise above both fortune and misfortune and transform adversities

into opportunities for spiritual growth that provided them the much-needed solace and strength to cope with their difficult life situation.

Atisa's Three Indian Masters of the Awakening Mind

One critical element of the traditional account of the origins of the mind training teaching is the story of the "three Indian masters" from whom Atiśa is said to have received instructions on awakening mind. Chekawa's teaching, as penned by his student Sé Chilbu (1121–89), is again an important source for the legend. According to this story, Atiśa received instructions on the generation of awakening mind from three different Indian masters. The first is the teacher Dharmarakṣita, a yogi whose compassion was so great that he once cut off a piece of his own flesh and gave it to a sick man as medicine. ¹² The second is Kusalī Jr., a dedicated yogi of Maitreya, who is therefore sometimes called Maitrīyogi. Finally, there is Serlingpa Dharmakīrti, whom Atiśa is said to have deliberately sought by braving a twelve-month sea voyage to the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

All biographies of Atiśa agree that, of the Indian masters on awakening mind, Atiśa held Serlingpa to be the most important.¹³ From the beginning of the twelfth century, especially after the codification of Atiśa's scattered sayings by Chekawa into the well-known seven points, Master Serlingpa's instructions on the cultivation of awakening mind as transmitted to Atiśa have effectively formed the kernel of the Tibetan mind training teachings. This seven-point approach became so influential that for many later authors, especially after the fifteenth century, Chekawa's *Seven-Point Mind Training* became almost equivalent to mind training itself.

Seven-Point Mind Training

Chekawa was one of the first teachers, if not the first, to present the key elements of Atisa's mind training instructions in terms of seven key points. The seven points are:

- 1. Presentation of the preliminaries
- 2. Training in the two awakening minds
- 3. Taking adversities onto the path of enlightenment
- 4. Presentation of a lifetime's practice in summary
- 5. The measure of having trained the mind
- 6. The commitments of mind training
- 7. The precepts of mind training

That Chekawa did not actually write all the lines of the *Seven-Point* in the sense of an author composing his own original work appears fairly certain. To begin with, there are at least two versions of so-called root lines of mind training—almost all lines of which find their way into the *Seven-Point*.

One version appears as the second work in the present anthology, where it is attributed to Atiśa. It is difficult to determine with any certainty who the original author of these seminal lines was and who first compiled them into a cohesive text. However, it seems likely that these lines were based on spontaneous instructions that Atiśa gave to different individuals on numerous occasions and that were later compiled by various teachers into oral transmissions so that they would not be lost. ¹⁴ Their origin in oral transmissions is evident from their brevity and vernacular style. It is perhaps also due to this oral origin that so many redactions of the root lines came about, some of which do not demonstrate any familiarity with the others. It is on the basis of some of these different redactions that Chekawa, drawing on the instructions of his teacher Sharawa, organized the root lines according to seven points.

Following the organization of the root lines on mind training into the seven key points, the Seven-Point Mind Training effectively became the root text of Atisa's mind training teachings. This short text attracted numerous commentaries from many great Tibetan teachers. Sé Chilbu's twelfth-century commentary compiled from Chekawa's own lectures is featured in the present volume, and it is this text that is the source for the root text in chapter 3. Later well-known ones include those by Thokmé Sangpo (fourteenth century), Hortön Namkha Pal (fifteenth century), the First Dalai Lama (fifteenth century), and Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (nineteenth century). At the beginning of the fifteenth century, thanks to Namkha Pal and other similar commentaries on the Seven-Point Mind Training, a unique transmission of the Seven-Point based upon the earwhispered instructions of the great Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) came into being. Atisa's mind training teachings became a particularly dominant element of pedagogy and practice in the dominant Geluk school founded by Tsongkhapa.

Due to this diversity in the presentation of the instructions of the *Seven-Point Mind Training*, several different redactions of the *Seven-Point* evolved.¹⁵ There are some variations in the length of these different versions, with certain lines appearing in some yet not in others. In addition, some versions present the training in the cultivation of the ultimate awakening mind (*bodhicitta*) in the beginning part, while others present the ultimate awakening mind toward the end.¹⁶

Compilation of the Present Anthology

The original Tibetan volume from which all the texts featured here are selected was put together by Shönu Gyalchok and his student Könchok Gyaltsen at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Shönu Gyalchok is said to have studied with numerous

noted fourteenth-century masters, including Tsongkhapa and Yakdé Panchen, but received the mind training instructions from a direct student of Thokmé Sangpo called Tsültrim Pal. As for Könchok Gyaltsen we know his dates to be 1388–1469 and that he was a known master in the Sakya tradition of the Path with Its Result (lamdré). As mentioned, the full text of this important anthology of mind training texts, Mind Training: The Great Collection, is today available in English translation under the same title. Here, however, we offer the seminal texts from within that collection for the benefit of a wider audience.

Our volume opens with Atisa's Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland followed by Root Lines of Mahayana Mind Training and the famed Seven-Point Mind Training, which as explained earlier, was compiled by the Tibetan master Chekawa. A Commentary on the "Seven-Point Mind Training" is Sé Chilbu's synthesis of Chekawa's oral teachings. Next to follow in the volume is the pithy Eight Verses on Mind Training by Langri Thangpa. Langri Thangpa was reputed for the depth of his compassion for all beings; he came to be nicknamed the "Crying Langthangpa," for he was said to be constantly consumed by compassion for the suffering of all beings. The commentary on Eight Verses on Mind Training featured next is the earliest exposition of this root text and was composed by Chekawa. Together, the texts in chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5 constitute the fundamental source texts of the Tibetan mind training tradition.

The next three texts, as well as one commentarial work, represent the instructions that Atisa is said to have received from his "three Indian masters of the awakening mind." The first ones, Leveling Out All Conceptions and its commentary, represent the instructions of Master Serlingpa of Sumatra. Wheel of Sharp Weapons, attributed to the Indian master Dharmaraksita, is a piognant verse work bringing sharp

awareness into our everyday lives based on a series of devastating critiques of the self-obsessed nature of our habitual thoughts and behaviors. Next, *Melodies of an Adamantine Song*, which is attributed to Maitrīyogi, presents a series of meditations on loving-kindness based on invoking Maitreya, whom the Mahayana tradition understands to be the embodiment of the loving-kindness of all enlightened beings.

Following these "Indian masters' texts," the next six works (11–16) present short instructions by Tibetan masters on particular facets of mind training. Next, the present volume features *Mind Training in a Single Session* by the famed master of Sangphu Monastery, Chim Namkha Drak (1210–85), an example of how all the key themes of mind training can be reviewed in a single session of formal sitting. The final text in the present volume is a special instruction on the meditative cultivation of universal compassion from the Indian adept Virvapa.

Conclusion

The texts in *Essential Mind Training* present the flowering of an important spiritual culture dedicated to the perfection of the human heart by cultivating the altruistic intention. In their birthplace of Tibet, these spiritual writings have inspired, nurtured, and transformed the hearts of millions of individuals across generations. Even though the first mind training texts emerged nearly a millennium ago, the simple yet profound teachings presented in them have retained their appeal and poignancy.

There is no denying that, if put into practice, the insights of mind training can exert powerful impact in our day-to-day lives. What can be more powerful in defusing the intensity of anger toward someone than imagining that person to be as vulnerable as a defenseless child? Who can deny the power of

countering jealousy or joy in another's suffering than reflecting in the following manner?

As for suffering, I do not wish even the slightest; as for happiness I am never satisfied; in this there is no difference between others and me. May I be blessed to take joy in others' happiness.

This stanza from Panchen Losang Chögyen's famed *Guru Puja* (seventeenth century) encapsulates a key teaching of the mind training tradition, where a profound recognition of the fundamental equality of self and others with respect to the basic drive to find happiness and avoid suffering becomes the basis for generating genuine compassion for all beings.

Today, as our world becomes ever more complex, with the consequence of making even our everyday lives a source of stress and constant challenge, I believe that these practical insights of Tibetan mind training can bring great benefit to many. In my own life, during now more than two decades living in the West amid all the complexities of modern existence, I have come to appreciate more deeply the value of the Tibetan mind training teaching. Confronted with the common question of how to maintain a healthy balance between parenthood, marriage, and work, and, more specifically, having to deal with the critical challenge of how to stay sane and rooted against all the social and cultural forces pulling us in so many directions, I have found the clear and poignant wisdom of lojong, especially the advice on maintaining a joyful state of mind, a tremendous source of personal inspiration and strength. So by making these Tibetan mind training teachings available for a general audience, it is my sincere hope and wish that many readers will be able to share in the wonderful insights of the mind training teachings and experience their profound rewards.



SEVEN POINTS

SEVEN-POINT MIND TRAINING is perhaps the earliest work organizing the assortment of root lines on mind training attributed to Atiśa into a systematic framework of instruction and practice. Prior to the emergence of the Seven-Point, it appears that these root lines remained scattered, giving rise to at least several different compilations referred to as "the root lines on mind training." In addition to the one above, Mind Training: The Great Collection includes another distinct set of such root lines.

As a simple comparison of the Seven-Point to the Root Lines on Mind Training above reveals, the two works are closely connected. In fact, some Tibetan authors make the point that Chekawa (1101-75) should be considered more as the compiler rather than the author of the Seven-Point, since all the key lines of that text, if not all, are attributable to Master Atiśa himself. Even the organization of the root lines into seven points is said to come from the instruction of Chekawa's teacher Sharawa. From a very early stage, however, the famed Seven-Point came to be hailed as "Chekawa's Seven-Point Mind Training."

As noted in my general introduction, Chekawa's discovery of the mind training instruction began with his intrigue upon hearing *Eight Verses on Training the Mind*, especially the lines "May I take upon myself the defeat / and offer to others the victory." Having heard these lines, Chekawa went on to seek out the full teaching as well as its sources. This quest took him to Sharawa's monastery, where one day he saw the master circumambulating

a stupa. Laying down his shawl-like upper robe on the floor, Chekawa asked Sharawa to be seated so that he could request some instructions. Thus began Chekawa's full discovery of the mind training instruction, which led to his presentation of it in seven points. After Langri Thangpa's *Eight Verses*, Chekawa's *Seven-Point* came to be the most well known and widely disseminated mind training teaching. Judging by the enormous volume of commentaries it attracted, it could be argued that the *Seven-Point* came to define what mind training is.

In terms of its literary genre, a unique characteristic of the lines of the *Seven-Point* is their pithy, aphoristic nature. Unlike *Eight Verses*, there are very few, if any, actual stanzas in the *Seven-Point*. Most of the lines are stand-alone maxims capturing an essential instruction or a specific spiritual practice. It's no wonder, therefore, that today some contemporary Western teachers of Tibetan Buddhism refer to these lines of the *Seven-Point* as "slogans." Furthermore, there is a certain orality to the lines in this text, as if they were meant to be recited aloud as you embark on the various practices presented in them. As the *Seven-Point* puts it, "In all actions, train by means of the words"; this constant use of maxims as an integral part of one's spiritual practice is an important feature of the mind training approach.

We are fortunate to have, through the commentary of Sé Chilbu (1121–89), access to the earliest exposition of Chekawa's Seven-Point Mind Training. That the author of this commentary studied and practiced at the feet of Master Chekawa for over two decades assures us that he knew the thoughts of his teacher quite intimately. In fact, there is no doubt in my mind that the commentary we have in our present anthology was compiled on the basis of lecture notes taken directly from Chekawa's exposition of the seven points. For example, throughout this commentary, the author frequently inserts the verb sung (gsungs), which can be translated as "said" or "taught,"

at the end of a sentence or paragraph. This is quite characteristic of a specific genre of Tibetan spiritual writing called *sindri* (*zin bris*), which are effectively lecture notes taken at a teaching or teachings and later compiled into a coherent text. So the verb "said" or "taught" at the end of a sentence or paragraph should be read as "the master taught" or "the master said," and "master" here refers to Chekawa.

Master Chekawa, whose personal name was Yeshé Dorjé, was born in central Tibet in the first year of the twelfth century. Although he was inspired initially to pursue a nonmonastic yogi's life and received teachings from Milarepa's disciple Rechungpa, at twenty he took ordination and became a monk. The turning point in his spiritual career came when he first heard *Eight Verses* from the Kadam master Chakshingwa and, more specifically, when at thirty years old he met Sharawa. With the founding of the monastery of Cheka, from which the epithet Chekawa is derived, he appeared to have ensured the continuation of the lineage of his teachings. On the personal level, he combined life as a hermit with his duties as the head of a monastery.

Although most renowned for his Seven-Point Mind Training, Chekawa is known also for another set of mind training instructions, all aimed at taking adversities onto the path of enlightenment. These instructions entail (1) taking obstacles onto the path of enlightenment through the cultivation of patience, (2) taking suffering onto the path through equalizing and exchanging self and others, (3) taking adverse conditions onto the path through turning one's adversaries into friends, (4) taking the afflictions onto the path through application of their relevant antidotes. In addition to his more practically oriented mind training works, Chekawa also composed one of the earliest works of the druptha genre, which contrasts the central tenets of various classical Indian philosophical systems.

3. Seven-Point Mind Training Chekawa Yeshé Dorjé

I. Presentation of the preliminaries, the basis First, train in the preliminaries.

II. Training in the awakening mind, the main practice

A. Training in ultimate awakening mind
Train to view all phenomena as dreamlike.
Examine the nature of the unborn awareness.
The remedy, too, is freed in its own place.
Place your mind on the basis-of-all, the actual path.
In the intervals be a conjurer of illusions.

B. Training in conventional awakening mind
Train alternately in the two—giving and taking.
Place the two astride your breath.
There are three objects, three poisons, and three roots of virtue.
In all actions, train by means of the words.

III. Taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment

When the world and its inhabitants boil with negativity, transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment. Banish all blames to the single source.

Toward all beings contemplate their great kindness.

With the three views and treasury of space, the yoga of protection is unexcelled. By meditating on illusions as the four buddha bodies, emptiness is protection unsurpassed. The fourfold practice is the most excellent method. Relate whatever you can to meditation right now.

IV. Presentation of a lifetime's practice in summary

In brief the essence of instruction is this: Apply yourself to the five powers. As Mahayana's transference method is the five powers alone, their practice is vital.

V. Presentation of the measure of having trained the mind

The intent of all teachings converges on a single point. Of the two witnesses uphold the principal one. Cultivate constantly the joyful mind alone. If this can be done even when distracted, you are trained.

VI. Presentation of the commitments of mind training

Train constantly in the three general points. Transform your attitudes but remain as you are. Do not speak of the defects [of others]. Do not reflect on others' shortcomings. Discard all expectations of reward. Discard poisonous food. Do not maintain inappropriate loyalty. Do not torment with malicious banter. Do not lie in ambush. Do not strike at the heart. Do not place the load of a dzo onto an ox. Do not sprint to win a race.

Seven-Point Mind Training

Do not abuse this [practice] as a rite. Do not turn the gods into demons. Do not seek misery as a means to happiness.

VII. Presentation of the precepts of mind training

Accomplish all yogas through a single means. Overcome all errors through a single means. There are two tasks—one at the start and one at the end. Whichever of the two arises, be patient. Guard the two even at the cost of your life. Train in the three difficult challenges. Adopt the three principal conditions. Contemplate the three that are free of degeneration. Be endowed with the three inseparable factors. Train constantly toward the chosen objects. Do not depend on other conditions. Engage in the principal practices right now. Do not apply misplaced understanding. Do not be sporadic. Train with decisiveness. Be released through the two: investigation and close analysis. Do not boast of your good deeds. Do not be ill-tempered. Do not be fickle. Do not be boisterous.

Because of my numerous aspirations, I have defied the tragic tale of suffering and have taken instructions to subdue self-grasping. Now, even if death comes, I have no regrets.

Through this proliferation of the five degenerations

transform [every event] into the path of enlightenment.

4. A Commentary on the "Seven-Point Mind Training" Sé Chilbu Chökyi Gyaltsen

Your precious body is the source of all goodness; Amid the dark ignorance of the three worlds you uphold the pure light that illuminates the path to liberation to you, Serlingpa, who are true to your excellent name,²⁵ I bow my head.

FOLLOWING HIS FULL enlightenment Lord Śākyamuni turned the wheel of Dharma three times, and after his entry into nirvana, the authors of the commentarial treatises elucidated these three turnings. Through the combination of the Buddha's sacred words and the commentarial treatises, the teachings flourished extensively in the world.

The doctrine is taught in terms of two vehicles, namely the Great Vehicle and the Lesser Vehicle; the Great Vehicle is divided further into two—Mantra and Perfection.²⁶ As far as their subject matter is concerned, all of these vehicles present, either directly or indirectly, the elimination of self-grasping and the cherishing of others—the two themes. Since there is only self-grasping to be eliminated and the well-being of others to be sought, those engaged in the practice of the Buddha's teaching must understand how to relate whatever practice they undertake to these two endeavors. You should practice in such a

manner. If you are able to, your Dharma practice will then be free of error, and you will arrive at the enlightened intent of the Buddha.

"Can these two points be practiced adequately on the basis of reading the treatises?"

No. The tantras are tangled, the main treatises are disorganized, and the pith instructions remain concealed. Sealed within six parameters,²⁷ they require dependence on the teacher's instructions [to understand]. In particular, in the context of our present uncommon Mahayana instruction, Atiśa possessed the instructions of three teachers. First, he had what he received from his teacher Dharmarakṣita. This teacher gave away even parts of his own body by cutting flesh from his thighs. Atiśa stated that although Dharmarakṣita's philosophical views were inferior, on the basis of this practice alone, one can be certain that he had attained the great seal [of perfection]. His philosophical standpoint was that of the Vaibhāṣika tenets of the Śrāvaka school, his scriptural authority was *Garland of Three Clubs*, ²⁸ while his analytic reasoning was based on Aśvaghoṣa's *Ornament of Sutras* and the *Jātaka Tales*.

Second, Atiśa possessed the instructions received from Maitrīyogi. He was the junior Kusalī brother, and he was known as Maitrīyogi because he meditated solely on Maitreya with special focus. His philosophical standpoint was that of nonabiding [Middle Way], his scriptural authority was the sutra on the *Questions of Akāśagarbha*, while in his analytic reasoning he followed Śāntideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* and the *Compendium of Trainings*.

Third, Atiśa also possessed the instruction he received from his teacher Serlingpa. Serlingpa's philosophical standpoint was akin to that of the non-Buddhist schools that, without relinquishing self-grasping, use it as the very ground for training. His scriptural authority was the *Teachings of Vimalakīrti*, while

in his analytic reasoning he followed the *Levels of the Bodhi-sattva*.³⁰ This instruction stems from Ārya Maitreya. The present teaching belongs to the instructions received from teacher Serlingpa.

This, in turn, is based on the following statement from the *Teachings of Vimalakīrti*:

[Egoistic] viewing of the perishable composite is the seed of the tathāgata.³¹

Just as a lotus grows not from a level soil but from the mire, in the same way the awakening mind is not born in the hearts of disciples in whom the moisture of attachment has dried up. It grows instead in the hearts of ordinary sentient beings who possess in full all the fetters of bondage. Therefore, in dependence upon this self-grasping, it is possible to cultivate the awakening mind that exchanges self and others, which is the uncommon cause for attaining buddhahood. This very self-grasping is, therefore, the core "bone" of the buddhas.

Since the teacher Serlingpa gave this to him as the kernel of his spiritual practice, Atiśa accorded great respect and reverence to this particular teacher, more so than to his other teachers. Atiśa stated, "The little warm-heartedness that I possess is due to the kindness of my teacher Serlingpa. Because of it, my lineage has blessings." Again, Atiśa is reported to have asserted that no remedy in either the Mantra or the Perfection vehicles can be an adequate substitute for entering the gateway of this spiritual practice. Atiśa bestowed this [teaching] upon the spiritual mentor Dromtönpa as his heart remedy practice. Although Dromtönpa had many disciples, his principal students were the three brothers.³²

Chenga Rinpoché is said to have stated that one must first equalize and then practice the exchange. "This," it is taught, "is

the tradition of Maitrīyogi." Potowa is reported to have stated, "As for me, when I received it from the old layman from Radreng's forest of junipers, ³³ I heard that, in the tradition of teacher Serlingpa, one must practice the exchange right from the start." Here I present the instruction of Potowa.

This has seven points:

- I. Presentation of the preliminaries, the basis
- II. Training in the two minds of awakening, the main practice
- III. Taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment
- IV. Presentation of a lifetime's practice in summary
- V. Presentation of the measure of having trained the mind
- VI. Presentation of the commitments of mind training
- VII. Presentation of the precepts of mind training

I. Presentation of the preliminary practices, the basis

The first point, the presentation of the preliminaries, which is the basis, is stated by the following:

First, train in the preliminaries.

The practitioner of this mind training must be someone who, by relying on a qualified teacher whose lineage stems from Atiśa, has trained his or her mind in the three scopes³⁴ in a systematic order and has thus reached a certain level. The practitioner, having generated the two awakening minds, aspiring and engaging, is cognizant of including even [the tiniest] precepts of these practices. These are the prerequisites.

To engage in the practice of the two minds of awakening, you, the practitioner, should first induce enthusiasm at the

beginning of your meditation session by earnestly contemplating the following points.

Reflect on the meaningfulness of having obtained a human existence of leisure and opportunity. To prevent yourself from wasting it, think: "I must practice Dharma. And among Dharma practices, this [mind training] is the most excellent." Then reflect, "Even though I may have found a human existence of leisure and opportunity, within my life's span there is no time to spare. Since in future lives I must experience happiness and suffering as fruits of my virtuous and negative karma, this [mind training] is the most excellent virtuous activity. Even for the goal of freedom from cyclic existence, no path is more profound than this. This [training] is also the supreme cause for attaining buddhahood for the benefit of self and others." Contemplate these points not only when your enthusiasm for the training of mind is strong but also when such enthusiasm is lacking.

II. Training in the two minds of awakening, the main practice

The second point, the training in the two minds of awakening, is the main practice. It has two parts: the ultimate mind and the conventional mind. Given the sequence in which meditative equipoise and postmeditation stages arise within a single person, these two minds are presented here in the following order. First, to train in the ultimate awakening mind, there are two parts: the actual meditation session and the subsequent period practices.

A. Training in ultimate awakening mind

1. The actual meditation session

The meditation session is threefold—preparatory practices, the main practice, and the concluding practice. As for preparation,

undertake the seven-limb practice in your sacred space,³⁵ make supplications to meditation deities and your teachers, and having seated yourself comfortably on your meditation cushion, count your breath—exhalation and inhalation—twenty-one times. With these practices, you make your body, speech, and mind fit for meditative concentration. Then generate, as a precursor, the conventional awakening mind accompanied by the beneficial qualities of meditative concentration.

During the main session, given that all of these [mind training practices] depend on the tradition of "simultaneous engagement," you should simultaneously meditate on the emptiness of all phenomena, including your own self and others. Although this is true, during the preparatory stage you must relate to these phenomena in a gradual manner, enumerating each phenomenon by means of the wisdom of discriminative awareness. This, the master said, ³⁶ has the benefit of allowing the moisture of tranquil abiding to give birth to the shoots of realization.

Next, the initial meditation on the absence of intrinsic existence of perceived objects is presented in the following line:

Train to view all phenomena as dreamlike.

This entire world of the external environment and the beings within it, which are by nature mere appearances, are nothing but apparitions of your own deluded mind. Thus not even a single atom exists with a reality separate from the mind. When you examine thus, you will come to realize that, even on the conventional level, no referent of your cognition is established as possessing substantially true existence. Contemplate in this manner.

Next, the meditation on the absence of the intrinsic existence of perceiving subjects is presented in the following line:

Examine the nature of the unborn awareness.

Contemplate thus: Similar [to the preceding meditation], the very mind that negated the intrinsic existence of the perceived objects [1] in terms of its past is no more, [2] in terms of its future is yet to be, and [3] in terms of its present is composed of three parts. It is devoid of color, shape, and spatial location; it cannot be said to be located in any specific point of the body; when analyzed, it is empty of all identifiable characteristics. [The perceiving mind too] abides as primordially unborn.

Next, the meditation on the absence of the intrinsic existence of phenomena is presented by the line:

The remedy, too, is freed in its own place.

Thus, the very mind that applies the remedies through seeing the emptiness of all phenomena, including your body and mind, is not established. In general, all objects of knowledge can be said to be either objects or minds. Furthermore, since we have already examined the mind, in its general form, to be devoid of intrinsic existence, you should think, "Certainly nothing is established primordially as substantially real." Free the mind of conceptualization in this manner and release it in this state of nongrasping at intrinsic nature in terms of any of the three times. Focus the mind with ease, lucidity, and vibrancy, not allowing it to fall under the influence of either dullness or excitation. This is presented by the next line:

Place your mind on the basis-of-all, the actual path.³⁷

Identify the ordinary mind and place it in a state free of negation or affirmation. Since all seven consciousnesses are conceptual, relinquish them. The essential point is to avoid being

tainted by the conception of subject-object duality. Subsequently, whenever concepts arise, by observing awareness with awareness, let them rest free within reality itself. Since this constitutes actual clear-light meditation, keep your sessions intense but brief; within one session, you can have many subsessions. As for the length of the meditation session, it is said that "the best session should have a stable base and end in a state of joy." At the conclusion, upon dissolving your visualizations, cultivate great compassion for those without such realization. Thinking, "I will place all beings in the undistorted truth of such ultimate mode of being," dedicate all your virtues for the benefit of others. Then slowly uncross your legs and perform the seven-limb rite³⁸ inside the sacred space.

2. The subsequent period [practices]

How to train in the subsequent practices is presented by the following:

In the intervals be a conjurer of illusions.

The subsequent periods must be cultivated without losing the flavor of your meditative equipoise. Therefore, even though perceptions of self and others, the external environment and the beings within it, and so on arise, it is your delusion that causes nonexisting things to appear [as existing]. Contemplating such things as indistinguishable from illusory horses and elephants, relinquish clinging to substantial reality. Although you perceive yourself in terms of your five aggregates, you are but an appearance of the mere aggregation of dependently originated things. Apart from this, no self possesses a permanent and unitary nature. Contemplate and see yourself as an illusory person who comes and goes and interacts with objects.

Do not remain blank, thinking nothing; instead be sustained by mindfulness, and the instant something appears to the senses, think, "This too is like an illusion; it is dreamlike." In this way, you should engage with objects on the basis of such adages.

As you view all things in this manner, during the subsequent periods your mind does not become remote from the dreamlike experience of the meditation session. In this way, in the intervals between sessions, turn all your virtuous activities into the path. Abide thus in the great union, retaining the experience of the meditation session throughout all activities. To drive home these points, the master declared the following stanza and explained the practices of the relevant points together with their benefits:

Thus ensure that all your practices remain untainted by the clinging of grasping at real entities and spread them across the vast spacelike great emptiness; you will then travel in the sphere of immortal great bliss.

B. Training in conventional awakening mind

Second, the conventional awakening mind of exchanging self and others is presented. This has been taught by Śāntideva. For example, he states:

He who wishes to quickly rescue both himself and others should practice the secret instruction: the exchange of self and others.³⁹

If you do not thoroughly exchange your own happiness with others' suffering,

you will not become a buddha. Even in samsara you'll have no joy.⁴⁰

From now on, to lessen harm to yourself and pacify the sufferings of others, give your self to others and protect others as you would your self.⁴¹

This, in turn, has two parts: the actual meditation session and the subsequent periods.

1. The meditation session

The way to practice during the meditation session is presented by the following:

Train alternately in the two-giving and taking.

Seated on a comfortable cushion, visualize your dear mother vividly before you. First, to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion, reflect as follows:

"Because my mother first gave me this human existence of leisure and opportunity, which she nurtured without negligence, I have encountered the Buddha's teachings. Because of this it is now possible to grab happiness by its very snout. ⁴² She has thus helped me. Throughout all stages of life, when I was in her womb and after birth, she nurtured me with impossible acts of kindness. Not only that, since samsara's beginningless time, she has constantly looked upon me with eyes of love, perpetually held me with affection, and repeatedly protected me from harm and misfortune. She has given me so much benefit and happiness and has thus embodied true kindness."

Reflect thus and cultivate a depth of emotion such that tears fall from your eyes and the hairs of your skin stand on end.

Reflect: "How sad that she, my kind mother, has been wandering in the infinite cycle of existence with so many kinds of sufferings, all the while working for my benefit. In return, I will now help her by providing her benefits and happiness. I will protect her from harm and all misfortune." You should reflect in this manner.

What harms this dear mother? Suffering harms her directly, while the origin of suffering injures her indirectly. So while thinking, "I will take all these upon myself," take into your own heart in clean swaths—as if layers sheared off by a sharp knife—all the sufferings, their origin, the afflictions, and the subtle obscurations to knowledge along with their propensities, all of which exist in your dear mother. This is the meditation on the "taking" aspect of awakening mind.

Again, thinking, "I myself will seek the complete happiness of my dear mother," unconditionally offer your body, wealth, and all your virtues to your mother. This is the meaning of the following lines of *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*:

To accomplish the welfare of sentient beings, I will make my body into a wish-fulfilling jewel.⁴³

Imagine therefore your body, wealth, and roots of virtue as precious wish-fulfilling jewels. From these emerge for your dear mother all the conditions for engaging in spiritual practice, such as food, clothing, shelter, helpers, as well as devotion to a spiritual teacher—all the conditions favorable to the attainment of enlightenment—whatever she wishes. Imagine, because of this, that your dear mother completes the accumulations and attains buddhahood. This is the meditation on the "giving" aspect of awakening mind.

In this manner, first cultivating loving-kindness and compassion, combine giving and taking; undertake their practices so that your heart becomes even more moist and ripe than before. As you train in this manner and become capable of making an actual exchange—that is, allaying your dear mother's sufferings and seeking her happiness without counting the cost to yourself—you have reached a degree of success in this practice. The measure is that were your mother reborn in the hells, you would plunge without hesitation into the burning flames to rescue her.

Then proceed to the second session. First cultivate love and compassion toward all sentient beings; then reflect: "When I generated the mind of awakening, I gave my wealth and roots of virtue to all sentient beings; I pledged to accomplish their welfare, taking this responsibility upon myself. I must now actually undertake this." As before, combine giving and taking and train in them. Here, when you engage in giving, imagine that each and every sentient being receives a complete set of your body, wealth, and virtues. Give these away wholeheartedly and with no conceptual elaborations. Thinking, "Whosoever desires, take them; do with them whatever you wish," regard yourself as a medicinal tree. Discarding joy and sadness, train with the mind and recite the words aloud.

Pray, "May my body, wealth, and roots of virtue that I have given away unconditionally become food, drink, and clothing for those who lack them; may they become shelter for those who lack shelter." In this way, think, "May I become the sole cause of the happiness of both samsara and nirvana for all sentient beings; may I become the cause for eliminating all their sufferings; may all higher qualities and fruits of the path of all sentient beings come into being in dependence upon me." Train with your mind and recite these prayers as well.

When training in this way, rejoice by thinking: "As the bud-

dhas have no aim besides the welfare of sentient beings, joyous indeed it is that I have the opportunity to enact from this very instant the heart practice of the great lord of the ten levels."⁴⁴ Again, take upon yourself the subtle obscurations to knowledge that exist within the śrāvakas, the pratyekabuddhas, and the noble bodhisattvas abiding on the levels, and as you give them your three factors [body, wealth, and roots of virtue], imagine that, as a result, they complete their accumulations and attain buddhahood. These noble beings can be either included in the general category of beings or visualized separately. Choose whichever is most convenient.

Place the two astride your breath.

Train in the two, giving and taking, in relation to your in- and out-breaths. This makes it easier to sustain your mental focus, because the breath is readily available, and this method combats many false modes of conceptualization.

2. The subsequent period

The subsequent period [practices] are presented in the next line:

There are three objects, three poisons, and three roots of virtue.

In subsequent periods, train your mind by purifying the fields of your experience. When you experience emotions like attachment, anger, and delusion in relation to sights, sounds, and so on that are attractive, unattractive, or neutral, train the mind as follows: "Sadly, just as I indulge my sensual cravings now, countless beings in the universe are overwhelmed by desire, indulging in countless negative acts." Extract all of these

[desires of other beings] in a single gesture, taking them into your heart and praying, "May all these sentient beings be endowed with the virtuous root of nonattachment." In the same way, extend this practice to all five poisons.⁴⁵

In all actions, train by means of the words.

This line refers to training the mind even by means of mere words. You can do this, for instance, by reciting the following lines from a treatise:

May the sufferings of all beings ripen upon me. Through my virtues, may they all achieve happiness.⁴⁶

Alternately, you can recite the following when no one is around: "May all sentient beings' sufferings and their causes ripen upon me, and may my own self be subdued and made no more. May my virtues ripen on all sentient beings, and may they become endowed with happiness." From your very bones, cultivate the thought "O my dear mother, my dear brother and sister sentient beings! Most dear indeed are all these beings!"

This training by means of words in your four everyday activities⁴⁷ involves following the sutra's admonition to cultivate loving-kindness by means of mere words.

III. Taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment

The third, taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment, is presented by the following:

When the world and its inhabitants boil with negativity, transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment.

Whatever misfortunes befall you, whether caused by living beings or by the elements, are fruits of your own past negative actions. Misfortunes are viewed as adversities and obstacles by those unfamiliar with Dharma. But for someone who has entered the gateway of Dharma, the master said, they are exactly like what Chengawa explained to Shawo Gangpa: "If someone has mind training, all of this—physical illness and mental suffering—becomes a skillful means through which you receive the blessings and higher attainments of the teachers and the Three Jewels." Therefore, transform every circumstance into a factor that instills in you the awakening mind.

This has two parts: (A) training in the two awakening minds (the extraordinary thoughts) and (B) striving in the dual practice of accumulation and purification (the extraordinary activities).

A. Training in the two awakening minds, the extraordinary thoughts

1. Taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment by means of training in the conventional awakening mind

Taking adverse conditions onto the path by means of the conventional awakening mind is taught first. So how do you take these onto the path?

Reflect: "Since beginningless time I have failed to distinguish properly between enemies and friends; I have failed to recognize what is to be relinquished and what is to be adopted. I have erred, for whatever spiritual practices I have pursued have all been expressions of self-grasping. I have become no more intimate with liberation and [the Buddha's] omniscience. Today, therefore, I will properly distinguish enemies from friends and ensure the success of my Dharma practice. From now on, my own self is the enemy, and sentient beings are the

friends. Beyond viewing my self as my enemy and relinquishing myself and viewing others as friends and cherishing them, nothing else is to be done."

a. Recognizing your own self as the enemy

The reason why your own self is the enemy is presented by the next line:

Banish all blames to the single source.

This line presents seeing your self as the enemy. Whatever befalls you, without blaming others, think, "This is due to my own self-grasping." In this way, cast out all the resentments you hold inside. It has been taught:

Whatever harms are in the world, whatever dangers and sufferings are in the world—all of these arise from grasping at self; what good is this great demon for me?

Also:

If there is "self," recognition of "others" arises; on this division into self and others, grasping and anger arise; and in relation to these two emotions, all calamities come into being. 48

Also:

Recognizing myself as flawed and others as an ocean of higher qualities, I will thoroughly discard grasping at self and practice embracing others.⁴⁹ Reflect, "All my shortcomings and defects come from grasping at selfhood. From beginningless time, I have held on to a self when there was none. Wherever I was born, though there was no self, I have grasped my body as [the basis of my] selfhood. Taking its side, I have resorted to rejection and affirmation depending on whether I deemed something desirable or undesirable. In this way I have committed all three—deception, duplicity, and deviousness—toward others and, as a consequence, have accumulated afflictions and negative karma again and again. This has compelled me, since beginningless time, to endure the incalculable sufferings of cyclic existence in general and the unfathomable sufferings of the three lower realms in particular. Still, as stated in the following:

Although countless eons have passed with such great hardships, you have sought only suffering.⁵⁰

"As long as I fail to view this self as the enemy, I will continue to seek its well-being. As a result, I will accumulate negative karma compelling me to wander further in this infinite cycle of existence, where I will suffer more and longer than before. So this cherishing of self brings all the sufferings of the three times. Since this self has been my executioner and enemy from beginningless time, then in my every death in the beginningless cycle of existence, no one else has done the killing. Rather I have slain myself!" As if biting your lower lip, 51 firmly hold your own self as the enemy.

Where is this enemy? It is in your own heart. Śāntideva illustrates this, for example:

If this ancient enemy long settled, the sole cause of steadily increasing hosts of harms,

has found its home within my very heart, how can there be joy for me within this cyclic exisence?⁵²

Think that this kind of behavior—living on the head yet denying victory to the eyes—is most inappropriate. Thus the focus or the site of this self-grasping, which is the source of all defects, is the very body you are born into. Since beginningless lifetimes you have held on to an "I" when there was none and have held on to a self when there was none. Self-grasping is fraught with defects and is the source of all sufferings. So to cherish, look at, and protect this discolored human corpse—a lump of pus and blood and a sack of mucus—is like carrying a bag of thorns on your back while naked! Happiness would result if you let go, but instead you believe that pursuing self-interest will bring happiness, and you thus sink ever deeper into suffering as though you craved it. Śāntideva, too, states:

Whatever suffering is in the world comes from seeking your own happiness, while whatever happiness is in the world comes from the wish for the happiness of others.

What need is there to say more? The childish pursue their own interests, while the buddhas act for the welfare of others: observe the difference between the two.⁵⁴

Among all the afflictions that have harmed you since beginningless time, this self-grasping is the worst. This jealous, evil-ridden force that causes beings to commit negative acts against all other beings, from high spiritual teachers to lice, resides right here within. It blocks the attainment of freedom from cyclic existence and ties beings further into bondage. This force

welcomes all human and nonhuman agents of harm. This owlheaded betrayer⁵⁵ is the very mind that grasps on to "I" or "self" and seeks only its own selfish ends. Thinking in this manner, recognize the enemy as the enemy. Śāntideva states:

In all the hundreds of world systems of cyclic existence, this has harmed me. Rouse your vengeance thus and destroy thoughts of self-interest.⁵⁶

If you still feel unable to eradicate this self-grasping, then cultivate the following thought: "This time it is different. Today I have sought a spiritual teacher, I have read the sutras, and as a result I have now recognized the enemy!" It has been stated:

The old days when you could ruin me at will are now gone; I can see you now, so where are you off to? I will tear down your arrogance.⁵⁷

Reflect along these lines, and whenever any self-centered thought arises, the master said, be vigilant and strike the snout of this boar with a cane. This is why it is said that all the teachings of the Great Vehicle contain only the two themes: (1) totally letting go of self-grasping and (2) upholding sentient beings with deep concern and, on this basis, crippling this self-grasping and nurturing sentient beings as much you can.

Furthermore, since all the sacred scriptures and treatises were taught to subdue the afflictions, it is the afflictions they must subdue. In general there are 84,000 afflictions, which can be subsumed into 212 classes. They can be further subsumed into the six root and twenty derivative afflictions. These, too, can be further subsumed into the five or three poisons, and

when subsumed further still, they are reduced to a single affliction, namely self-grasping alone. Whosoever has subdued it to the highest degree enjoys the highest degree of happiness; to a medium degree, a medium degree of happiness; and to a minimal degree, a minimal degree of happiness. He who has not subdued it at all will enjoy no happiness at all. So the root of suffering is self-grasping; and since all faults and defects are contingent upon it, you must abandon from now on any clinging to your body and mind and regard these instead as your enemies. Most importantly you must abandon your clinging to the body. On this point Santideva states:

If I am attached to my body, fear arises from even slight dangers. This body that brings so much fear who would not detest it like an enemy?⁵⁹

Reflect, "Although I have striven hard since beginningless time to benefit this body, it is in the nature of a material object and thus feels no joy or pain in relation to any benefit or harm. As for the mind, it is devoid of substantial reality and empty. Since what appears conventionally right now comes into being from causes and conditions, it is devoid of intrinsic identity. Furthermore, since the causes and effects cease every moment, nothing is established following its origination. Therefore think, "Until now I have been preoccupied with worthless, ruinous pursuits. Starting now I will regard my own self as the enemy and call upon all eight classes of worldly gods, demigods, and demons, and all eighty thousand families of obstructive forces to withdraw their defense of this self." Train with the thought "Be my ally and help vanquish this self-grasping; help make my five aggregates appear devoid of substantial reality and empty."

By engaging in these practices to the best of your ability, the master entreated, strive to subdue this self-grasping demon during your brief life.

Shawo Gangpa states: "If we fail to see our own self as the enemy, no one, not even our teachers, can save us. If we see it as the enemy, benefits will ensue."60~

So if you view your own self as the enemy, even when harms brought on by hosts of nonhumans and malevolent elemental spirits befall you, these become harms perpetrated against the enemy. They become allies in your battle against self-grasping. Since they are a powerful army on your side, it is inappropriate to generate anger toward these agents of harm; look on them instead with joy. At some point in your future, the master said, a true spiritual practice will emerge that can free you from the narrow ravines of adverse conditions. At that point you should train in [the recognition of others as] friends. In this way, train now to view self and others, respectively, as enemy and friends.

Occasionally, you should train your mind also by drawing a distinction between enemy and friend even within yourself. You can give your lay name to your thoughts and actions concerned with the pursuit of your own welfare and your ordination name to your thoughts and actions concerned with the pursuit of others' welfare. Then, following the example of the spiritual mentor Ben, correlate your arms, right and left, to avoidance of nonvirtue and adoption of virtuous acts. The spiritual mentor Ben states: "My only task is to stand guard with a short spear of antidote at the entrance of my mind. When the afflictions are vigilant, I too am vigilant; when they are relaxed, I too am relaxed." Also, "Be vigilant and strike the snout of each boar with a cane and chase it." All the sutras and commentarial treatises demonstrate that there is no other task besides eliminating self-grasping.

These, then, present the perception of one's own self as the

enemy and the elimination of self-grasping. It is because of Shawopa's teachings we have the expression "the practice for smashing the demon's head."

b. Recognizing sentient beings as friends and cherishing them

Second, viewing sentient beings as friends and cherishing them is presented by the line:

Toward all beings contemplate their great kindness.

Shawopa calls this "the spiritual practice of carrying the flesh and carrying the blood." It is called "the practice of accepting all ill omens as charms." Here you deliberately focus on the perpetrators of harm and cultivate loving-kindness and compassion and then train in giving and taking.

First is the meditation on loving-kindness. Reflect, "These humans and nonhumans, who inflict harm upon me, have been related to me so many times as my parents, siblings, and friends—the frequency of which is greater than the number of *kolāsita* nuts [required to cover the face of the earth].⁶² They have constantly looked at me with eyes of love, perpetually sustained me with affectionate hearts, and constantly guarded me from harm and unhelpful situations. They have granted me all kinds of advantages and happiness and are thus embodiments of true kindness." Reflecting thus, develop deep and earnest empathy for them; feel as though, were you able to place them deep within your heart, you would still not be content. View them as pieces of your own heart. Atiśa refers to beings as "my divinities" and "my spiritual teachers."

The meditation on compassion is as follows. Reflect, "They harm me today not willfully but out of a deluded mind. I have

pursued my own self-interest since beginningless time, without regard to negative karma, suffering, or disrepute, and I have thus accumulated afflictions and negative karma. Because of this I have wandered in this infinite cycle of existence, embracing misery as practice. The blame for all of this lies in the self. Even at present, in my quest for enlightenment for the benefit of self and others, as I uncontrollably exploit and create obstacles for my dear mothers because of my negative karma, I am causing obstacles to the happiness of all sentient beings. So the blame for their departing to the hells in their future lives lies also in me. This is most sad indeed!" Cultivate compassion as intense as a hot coal on your bare flesh. In this manner, cultivate loving-kindness and compassion focused specially on the perpetrators of harm.

If you cultivate loving-kindness and compassion in this manner, because nonhumans have some karmically acquired clair-voyance, the moment you recognize them as your mothers, they will recognize you as their child. When this mother-child attitude emerges, how can they inflict harm? It is a law of nature that when I relate to someone as my mother, she will in turn relate to me as her child. This alone can alleviate your suffering. The *Condensed Perfection of Wisdom* states:

The world of humans is replete with elemental spirits and diseases,

but these are pacified with power of truth by those who care and have compassion.⁶³

When you cultivate loving-kindness and compassion toward the perpetrators of harm, you arrive at the following realization: "Since beginningless time, they have only benefited me, yet I have given only harm in return. Therefore, from now on, I shall help them and protect them from harm." With this

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thought, combine the two practices of giving and taking and train your mind. Take upon yourself all leprosy and sickness in the world.⁶⁴ Heap upon your present sickness all the negative karma within your own life, all that you are likely to reap in the remainder of your life or in your future life, and rejoice.

Again, train as follows. Invite the malevolent nonhuman spirits to the space before you and declare: "The number of times you have been my mother is beyond count. Also, if I were to pile together the number of times I ate your flesh, drank your blood, chewed your bones, wore your skin, and sucked your milk, even the entire trichilicosmic universe would be too small to contain it all. I have also killed you, assaulted you, and robbed you countless times. Today you have merely come to collect the debt. Today please take as payment all these kind acts and offerings. It is appropriate that you own me, for you have been most kind indeed."

Reflecting thus, declare: "Devour my flesh if you like flesh! Drink my blood if you like blood! Chew my bones if you like bones! Peel away my skin and wear it if you like skin! Eat me raw if you are in haste, and if not, then eat me cooked!" Potowa is reported to have expressed:

I offer ritual cakes in the four directions to all beings of the six realms How much I yearn for the time when I'm devoured and carried away by insects!

Then imagine that the nonhuman spirit rises up instantly and devours you from head to heels, smearing his mouth with your blood. His body now full, his harmful intentions disappear, and he becomes endowed with altruistic thoughts. Imagine that, as a byproduct, your negative karma becomes cleansed. Imagine that a moment later, your body rematerializes and is again

devoured. Visualize this over and over. Imagine that your body is cut into a hundred or a thousand pieces, and these are then offered everywhere. In particular, share this body and mind in places of special sensitivity [such as cemeteries]. Then, with the thought "This body of mine belongs to him," undertake all virtuous practices for [the nonhuman spirit's] sake. Even the concluding dedication should be done on his behalf. In particular, where such nonhuman forces reside, mentally discard your body, and cutting it open right there, with blood soaking everything, offer it with the thought "Now eat!" Then let go of cherishing your body as stated:

I have already given this body to all beings to do with as they please. Let them do with it whatever they wish, such as beating it; why should I be concerned?⁶⁵

These lines present the practice of regarding sentient beings as friends and cherishing them. Thus it is necessary to train your mind by distinguishing between the two classes—enemy and friend.

Shawopa states: "Search for the enemy in oneself; search for a god in the demons; search for virtues in nonvirtues; and search for happiness in suffering."

Langri Thangpa, too, says: "No matter what profound scriptures I open, I find none that do not suggest that all faults are your own, and that all higher qualities belong to brother and sister sentient beings. Because of this, you must offer all gain and victory to others and accept all loss and defeat for yourself. I have found no other meaning."

Shawopa states: "If someone finds a meaning other than this, it is an error." In brief, the master said, no other intent can be

found in all the scriptural collections. With this, the taking of adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment by means of conventional awakening mind has now been presented.

2. Taking adverse conditions onto the path by means of training in ultimate awakening mind

Following this, the second, taking adverse conditions on to the path of enlightenment by means of training in ultimate awakening mind, is presented in the following:

With the three views and treasury of space, the yoga of protection is unexcelled. By meditating on illusions as the four buddha bodies, emptiness is protection unsurpassed.⁶⁶

Conclude decisively that everything in this world of appearance, both the external environment and the beings within—for example, the victim and the perpetrator—are only deluded perceptions of your own mind. As mere deceptive, deluded appearances, both sides will cease within moments, with no time either to injure or to engage in any negation or affirmation. Even conventionally, nothing exists as an object or agent of harm. On the ultimate level no phenomenon is primordially established. Like the center of a spotless sky, phenomena are all one.

Since self is an instance of awareness that is devoid of substantial reality, and the agent of harm is an instance of awareness devoid of substantial reality as well, neither exists as the victim or the perpetrator. Everything is empty, and emptiness cannot be attacked by emptiness. Just as the eastern part of the sky cannot cause harm to the western part, they [the harmed and the harmer] cannot injure each other. Therefore, since your

current perceptions are illusions of a deluded mind—the self, the victim, and the ailments—other than being constructs of your mind, they do not exist with any sort of identity. It is taught:

Your own mind is Māra; your own mind is the obstruction; all obstructions arise from conceptualization; therefore relinquish conceptualization.⁶⁷

Because you have grasped your concepts as real, as true, as something separate from the mind, and as fault-ridden, this has produced all the sufferings of cyclic existence. Apart from your own conceptualization, nothing outside is an obstructor; therefore your own conceptualization is the sole thing to be eliminated. When examined in this manner, everything comes down to your mind; and the mind, too, when examined, is found to be emptiness. There is no difference between the clear-light nature of your own mind, the clear-light nature of the minds of all sentient beings, and the pristine cognition of the Buddha's enlightened mind; they are equally dharmakaya—the buddha body of reality. So who can be harmed? Who causes the harm? And how is anyone harmed? Ultimately, nothing exists as a separate reality. Conventionally, however, all illnesses and malevolent forces exist as your own concepts. Reflecting that "The concepts [too] exist as dharmakaya," place the mind naturally at rest, free of any conceptualization. Like throwing up vomit, place your mind free of all clinging. Like the corpse of a leper, discard it as if it were of no use. Like a dead person's [abandoned] empty house, let it be without clinging.

Reflect: "Phenomena are not established primordially, yet I remain bound, as though unable to undo knots made in the sky or strangled by a tortoise-hair noose. 68 As such, my mind has

arisen as a demon, and chained by conceptualization, I remain enmeshed in suffering." All hopes and fears, such as fearing illness or harm from ghosts, or hoping to be cured of illnesses, as well as all thoughts of negation and affirmation in emptiness: place them all within the sphere of emptiness and release them within ultimate reality itself.

Imagine that, unable to bear this, you react violently, pulling at the hem of your clothes and shouting your name aloud [to try and affirm your existence]. You tremble, the hairs on your body stand up, and you experience the dissolution of the ten classes of consciousness. Fat that instant, of the two streams of awareness [one undergoing the experience of dissolution and the other observing this process], think that they are both your own mind; they are but different modes of perception. As you contemplate thus, your thoughts and awarenesses will calm, and your body and mind will rest in their own natural states. When the thought arises spontaneously "Oh, everything is my mind," nonconceptuality dawns in its nakedness.

Therefore, when sickness, malevolent forces, and your own self are examined with the pristine cognition of discriminative awareness, none are found to have ever come into being; this is the unborn dharmakāya. The unborn has no cessation, and this absence of cessation is the unceasing enjoyment buddha body (sambhogakāya). Between origination and cessation is no abiding, and this absence of abiding is the nonabiding emanation buddha body (nirmānakāya). That which does not exist in any of the three times is devoid of substantial reality, and this absence of substantial reality is the natural buddha body (svabhāvakāya).

View this absence of four resultant buddha bodies—which are separate from the three factors of sickness, malevolent forces, and your own mind—as the [actual] four buddha bodies. In this way you recognize that every conceptualization places the four buddha bodies in your very palms. View every

conceptualization as an intimation of ultimate reality. View all illnesses and malevolent forces as embodiments of kindness. This is the "instruction on introducing the four buddha bodies," which presents the transformation of adverse conditions into the path by means of the ultimate awakening mind.

To conclude the practice of the two awakening minds, or as a meditation implicit within it, cultivate the following viewpoint to help sever hopes and fears: "Since this inflicter of harm has led me to train in the two awakening minds, it is placing enlightenment in my very palms. It is thus most kind indeed.

"Furthermore, like a messenger it bears a warning: 'Suffering like the present one results from a cause—a negative, nonvirtuous karma. To avoid suffering in the future, you must purify its cause, the negative karma; forsake all negative acts.' It is therefore kind indeed."

Think, "These perpetrators of harm expose my lack of antidotes, my failure even to notice afflictions arising, and are thereby definitely emanations of my teacher." Thinking thus, view them with joy from the depths of your heart.

Think furthermore, "This one who harms me reveals within this very life the sufferings of a future life in the lower realms—the fruit of my past lives' negative karma. He holds us away from the gaping opening of the lower realms and is therefore most kind indeed."

Reflecting, "If he has benefited me this much, he must definitely be an expression of the enlightened activities of the teachers and the Three Jewels," view the one who harms you as desirable, endearing, and close to your heart. View sickness and other kinds of suffering as having similarly beneficial qualities.

Even if you contract leprosy, reflect, "This will bring the threat of future sufferings to the fore. This life is but a momentary event, and were I not ill with leprosy, my mind would be enmeshed in the chores of this mundane life, leading me to

accumulate negative karma. Given that [illnesses and so on] put an abrupt end to this and enable me to encounter Dharma, they help me extract what is most essential from this bodily existence." In this way, view leprosy and other illnesses with heartfelt, uncontrived joy.

Furthermore, think, "Sickness and other sufferings engender true renunciation in me; for without suffering, there can be no true renunciation. Since they definitely help dispel the afflictions of my mind, they help me realize the teachings' intent. So they are most kind indeed!" For it is stated:

With disenchantment, arrogance is dispelled.70

Furthermore suffering brings forth compassion, which is the root of the Great Vehicle. For it is stated:

Toward samsaric beings, generate compassion.⁷¹

Reflect: "Suffering dispels all my suffering and secures all my happiness and therefore brings me benefit." Just as your teachers and preceptors are most kind in conferring vows upon you and giving teachings, sentient beings and harmful elemental forces also help you attain enlightenment. You should therefore view all of them, too, as your spiritual teachers and contemplate their great kindness.

When you learn to train your mind in this manner, all activities of your body, speech, and mind, and everything that appears in the field of your senses will be transformed into the two accumulations. From that point onward, you will have a spiritual practice where nothing goes to waste. It is from here that the three innumerable eons start.

With this, the training in the two awakening minds—the special thoughts—has been presented.

B. Striving in the dual practice of accumulation and purification, the extraordinary activities

Transforming adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment by means of striving in the twin practices of accumulation and purification—the extraordinary activities—is presented as follows:

The fourfold practice is the most excellent method.

When you are suffering, thoughts wishing for happiness arise uncontrollably. Use such moments to motivate you as follows.

I) The first practice is the accumulation of merit: "If you wish for happiness free of suffering, cultivate faith and respect toward the teachers and the Three Jewels, which are the causes of all happiness; gather the accumulations." Think that your suffering admonishes you to think such thoughts. Make extensive offerings to the Three Jewels, offer alms and services to the spiritual community, make torma offerings to the elemental spirits, give charity to ordinary folk, and, making prayers for the cessation of your hopes and fears, offer mandalas and other articles to the teachers and the Three Jewels. Cultivate faith and respect toward them, go for refuge and generate the awakening mind, and make the following appeal with fervent joy: "Since I am ignorant, please care for me in the best way possible." Make the following supplication as well:

If being sick is best, please make me ill. If being cured is best, please restore my health. If being dead is best, please make me die. If long life is best, please prolong my life. If shorter life is best, please shorten my life. May all enjoy the fortune of enlightenment.

2) The second practice is the purification of negative karma. Again, imagine that your suffering comes as a messenger, exhorting you, "If you do not desire suffering, abandon the cause, which is negative karma." With this thought, purify negative karma through the four powers.⁷² In the presence of the Three Jewels, engage also in the rites requesting forbearance [from them for any shortcomings] as well as engage in the extensive purification rites.

3) The third practice is making offerings to the malevolent forces. Offer torma to the agents of harm. Those who can mentally handle it should also do the following meditation:

Summon in front of you the agent of harm, visualized as a meditation deity, and reflect, "You are kind indeed, for you have led me to the two awakening minds; you have helped me in my quest to find happiness and dispel suffering. I request you further to cause all the sufferings of sentient beings to ripen in my current illness. Please do not depart. Instead stay inside this body of mine and ensure that this sickness is not cured but endures."

Thus joyfully let go of your body and mind, and sever all hopes, fears, and desire for happiness. Without dwelling on sadness, feel a wondrous enthusiasm well up from the depth of your heart.

Those unable to contemplate along these lines should here cultivate loving-kindness and compassion with special emphasis. Reflect, "Through obstructing my work for the benefit of all sentient beings, you will be reborn in the hells in your next life. I will help you with material and spiritual gifts; cease harming me, therefore, and leave." Exhorting thus, confront them with words of truth. Visualizing the agents of harm as deities is like placing an evil person on the seat of a king. Then you will not be able to do them any harm. This is another approach.

4) The fourth practice is offering torma to the Dharma protectors and supplicating them as follows: "Please ensure that no

obstacles arise in my meditative practice. Remember the promises and the solemn oaths you have taken in the presence of the buddhas."

Train with effort in this way in these four practices—(1) making offerings to the deities and the spiritual teachers and supplicating them, (2) purifying your negative karma, (3) making offerings to the malevolent forces, and (4) making offerings to the Dharma protectors.

Having now presented the practice of taking adverse conditions onto the path, the following presents the yoga of inbetween sessions:

Relate whatever you can to meditation right now.

When adverse circumstances strike unexpectedly, train in the two awakening minds right there and then. For instance, if you are struck with leprosy or a severe infection, if you are lynched, beaten, robbed, or attacked with weapons, or if you simply fail to fulfill your desires (due to harms from inanimate forces or acute, unbearable pain), think how the vast universe contains infinite cases like your own, and generate compassion for those. As you mentally take all of these upon your own suffering in one fell swoop, imagine your suffering increases to such intensity that your heart feels it will break.

Following this, reflect, "This inflicter of harm has been my spiritual teacher for training in the awakening mind and the practice of forbearance, and has thus been most kind to me." The moment you see these sufferings in others, right there and then take them upon yourself. Also when intense, unbearable afflictions arise in others due to their attachment and anger, contemplate as before and heap them upon yourself. After this imagine all other beings as free of both suffering and its causes and enjoying happiness.

Langri Thangpa once said, "All of what is called 'transforming adverse conditions into enlightenment' entails the cessation of hopes and fears. So long as these two do not cease, you cannot take adverse conditions onto the path. Even if eventually you happened to be led to the path that is free of hopes and fears, to train in the differentiation of enemy and friend at that time would be like trying to straighten a crooked tree." ⁷⁷³

IV. Presentation of a lifetime's practice in summary

The fourth point, the presentation of a lifetime's practice in summary, is presented in the following:

In brief the essence of instruction is this: Apply yourself to the five powers.

The yogi of this teaching should engage in all mind training by means of a condensed practice of the five powers.

- I) First is the *power of propelling intention*. "From now until my full enlightenment, I will never be divorced from the two awakening minds, and I will not allow my mind training to lose its continuity. From now until my death, I will never part from the two awakening minds." Repeat the same resolve in terms of "this year" and "this month," and so on. Repeatedly propel your thoughts in this way with great force.
- 2) The power of acquaintance refers to cultivating the two awakening minds at all times, free of distraction.
- 3) The *power of positive seeds* means striving, during the periods in between formal sitting sessions, in virtuous activities—such as engaging in the ten spiritual practices, ⁷⁴ without any interruption and through whatever medium is most convenient, whether it is your body or your wealth—in order to engen-

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der those experiences of this mind training teaching that have not yet arisen and enhance those already arisen.

- 4) The power of eradication is the actual eradication of self-grasping. How long have you wandered in cyclic existence in general and in the three lower realms in particular? This is brought about by cherishing your self and desiring its happiness. Even within this life, all undesirable events—inability to maintain a relationship with your partner, lack of integrity in your promises and vows, and an absence of interest in cultivating the spiritual realizations, from the rarity of human existence to no-self—all are due to cherishing your self and desiring its happiness. Every one of your defects is therefore contingent upon this. With the thought "From here on I will never seek the self's welfare for even a single instant; instead, I must totally eliminate this," view self-cherishing in this manner and regard it as the enemy.
- 5) The power of aspirational prayer is this. Upon completing any virtuous act, make the following aspiration: "From this moment until I have attained buddhahood, throughout all my lives, may I never be divorced from the two awakening minds, and may I instead train in them. May I know how to take all circumstances that befall me, whether positive or adverse, into this training." Then make offerings to the teachers and the Three Jewels, and offer a torma to the Dharma protectors and the elemental spirits, supplicating them thus: "Help me so that I am never divorced from the two awakening minds throughout all my lives. Help me to meet sublime teachers who reveal this teaching." This, the master said, is a teaching that folds everything into a single utterance of hūm.

As Mahayana's transference method is the five powers alone, their practice is vital.

Thus when those who have trained their minds throughout their entire lives contract a fatal illness and become aware of their imminent death, they must apply this very mind training teaching as the time-of-death instruction and effect the transition while engaged in such practice. Practices such as tantra cannot be practiced at this juncture; they should go through the transition by means of the five powers alone.

- 1) First undertake the practice of the power of *positive seeds*.⁷⁵ To do this, you offer your belongings to the teachers and the Three Jewels as the gifts of the deceased.⁷⁶ It is inappropriate to give these belongings to beings who might be your objects of clinging. Prepare so that even in your aftermath your possessions do not become conditions for accumulating negative karma. Make excellent offerings to those worthy of veneration. It is inappropriate to offer only tokens of your belongings to those who are embodiments of kindness.⁷⁷ Then, without any attachment to your possessions of this life, generate a fearless attitude with regard to your future life.
- 2) The power of aspirational prayer is as follows. Lay out an excellent array of offerings in the presence of the Three Jewels, request forbearance for your shortcomings, and declare and purify your negative karma. Review as well the pledges you have taken, such as that of going for refuge. Then make offerings to the Three Jewels, offer tormas to the Dharma protectors, and make this fervent request to be led to the threshold of the path: "Bless me so that in the intermediate state and the next life I will remember the two awakening minds and engage in their practice. Help me to encounter sublime teachers who reveal this teaching. Lead me to the beginning of my path of happiness. Today I place my hope in you." Then invoke the following aspirations again and again: "May I train in the two awakening minds during the intermediate state; may I train in the two awakening minds through-

out all lives; may I meet sublime teachers who reveal this teaching."

- 3) The power of *eradication* is as follows. "That which grasps at self and 'I' has made me suffer since beginningless time and has also caused my present suffering. So long as I am not divorced from this, no happiness can arise. How have I allowed it to ruin me? This happened because I have assumed a physical body. So I will definitely not assume a physical body in the intermediate state. I will allow my mind to fade into space." Reflecting in this manner repeatedly, eradicate self-grasping.
- 4) Next is the power of *propelling intention*. "In the past I enhanced the two awakening minds so that their continuity was not interrupted. I will now recollect the two awakening minds during the intermediate state and engage in their training." Repeatedly reflect and recollect along these lines.
- 5) As for the power of *acquaintance*, the key is to first train uninterruptedly in the awakening mind.

Then, as you approach the moment of death, lie down on your right and, placing your right hand on your cheek, block the right nostril with your little finger, and breathe through the left nostril. This is transference in terms of your conduct.

Then, preceded by loving-kindness, train in the dual practice of giving and taking on the basis of your in- and out-breaths. While in this state, engage in the practice of ultimate awakening mind thus, contemplating, "Everything that shares the nature of samsara and nirvana has its root in the deluded mind. As for the mind, it never deviates from its primordial nature of dharmakāya." Reflect how, in reality, even what is called death has no existence. Combine these two contemplations, engage in their practice, and die while in that mindstate.

If you are unable to do this, then arouse the true nature of samsara and nirvana that is free of rejection and affirmation within the expanse of the ever-present innate dharmakāya,

which is the uncontrived mind itself. Release your mind restfully in the ultimate expanse and place it upon the mind's ultimate nature, which is devoid of transference. Then, even if you are unable to die [in tune with the meditative state] because of temporarily losing your mindfulness, you will still die with the instruction appropriate for the moment of death. Although numerous celebrated moment-of-death instructions exist, the master said nothing is more amazing than this [instruction presented here].

With these, the complete aspects of the path have been presented without omission.

V. Presentation of the measure of having trained the mind

The fifth point, the measure of having trained the mind, is presented by the following:

The intent of all teachings converges on a single point.

The scriptures and the treatises were taught for the purpose of overcoming self-grasping; thus there is no target for the trio of study, reflection, and meditation to destroy other than this. When examined, the selfhood of persons is as nonexistent as the horns of a rabbit; nevertheless it has made us suffer since beginningless time. Observe and analyze whether all your endeavors of body, speech, and mind are directed toward reinforcing your self-grasping or bringing its downfall. If they are reinforcing it, you are striving solely out of the eight mundane concerns and for the pursuit of greatness in this life. If this is the case, then even if you are observing ethical discipline with dedication, you have erred with regard to your paternal spiritual lineage. Even if you are training the mind through study, reflection, and meditation, your practice has gone awry.

On the other had, if your endeavors are toppling self-grasping, you are achieving the true purpose of industrious ethical discipline and you are training the mind skillfully. In this way, by fostering genuine mind-training realizations in your mind, you can likewise attain the full measure of Dharma practice. Since this is a benchmark for determining whether a Dharma practice has truly become a Dharma practice, the master said, this is the long bar of a scale on which the practitioner is weighed. Learn how to turn all your endeavors of body, speech, and mind into antidotes to self-grasping.

Of the two witnesses uphold the principal one.

People might say of you, "This brother's heart has become softened, like a piece of wool that has been washed. Genuine spiritual practice has arisen in him. 'True Dharma practitioner' refers to all who are like him.' Not being disapproved of by those who are reputedly sublime is a form of witness. But this should not be the principal one. Why? Others may praise you when they observe one or two good actions or when you do a few things that please them, but other people cannot fully penetrate your depths.

What, then, is the principal witness? It is avoiding your own scorn. Feel that, even if you were to die this evening, you could have done nothing more; you have striven to the best of your capacity with faith, intelligence, and perseverance, regardless of how weak these may have been, such that your guts fill with air, and blood and water gush forth [within your veins]. At that point you have attained a qualified stage of meditative practice. Therefore hold the principal witness to be this fact of not becoming the object of your own scorn.

Cultivate constantly the joyful mind alone.

This line suggests that, having trained your mind and tasted the flavor of true Dharma practice, no matter what adverse circumstances befall you, you experience no disturbance within, for you immediately think: "I can cultivate its remedy, the two awakening minds." Remaining unassailed in such a manner is another measure of having trained your mind.

In the same vein, regarding the four desirable things and four undesirable things in the world, when you train the mind by focusing on the four undesirable things, 80 everything becomes desirable. You will find no precipitous terrain or obstructions, and thus your mind will always be filled with joy, and the edifice [of your Dharma practice] will not crumble. This too is a measure of having trained the mind.

Again, when you have trained the mind in the dual practice of giving and taking, then whatever suffering afflicts your body and mind, you will spontaneously have the thought, "Now, my theft from others in the past has its consequence," and you will once again experience extraordinary joy. In brief, whatever undesirable events occur, if they are conducive for training your mind and cause no disquiet, this is the measure of having trained the mind. At that point your remedy has reached its true depth.

If this can be done even when distracted, you are trained.

Just as a skilled rider does not fall when the horse rears suddenly, a trained mind spontaneously applies antidotes when adversities arise unexpectedly, such as unanticipated criticism and insults. If these become conducive to the awakening mind, and if you do not fall prey to adversities, your mind is trained.

Furthermore, cultivate the thought, "The time of my death is unknown, and were it to come suddenly, my sole recourse would be this practice. This is true Dharma; wonderful indeed

is my path!" In this way, make sure you fortify your mind so that no matter when you die, you do so joyfully and with palpable warmth within.

If you have these signs of being trained, illnesses and demons will enhance your realizations. This doesn't mean that you need not train your mind further. This merely presents the measure of when the remedy has been applied fully.

VI. Presentation of the commitments of mind training

Train constantly in the three general points.

This line expresses that (1) your mind training should not contravene your pledges, (2) your mind training should not become ostentatious, and (3) your mind training should not be biased.

- the law of karma and its results. This includes ignoring the minor precepts with the assertion "Since I am training the mind, nothing can harm me" and behaving in ways that contradict general Dharma conduct, saying, "If I have this mind training, I don't need anything else." Engage in mind training with your thoughts, while in your actions observe, in a pure way, all the pledges and commitments you have taken, from the Vinaya up to the Vajrayana. Make sure your practice and everyday conduct accord with and can withstand close scrutiny when judged against the scriptures.
- 2) The second point means discarding such ostentatious behaviors as sleeping in dangerous places, felling harmful trees, 81 visiting areas where you may contract contagious diseases, associating with people whose commitments have lapsed, with lepers, or with those possessed by demons. Do not act contrary to the Kadampa's way of life, a great tradition

that has been established by Geshé Dromtönpa at Radreng. Practice instead as if lifting all four corners of square cloth. Shawopa has said: "Examine where you might go astray. You have erred when your spiritual practice becomes obnoxious." Forsake consorting with those with degenerated commitments or morality or who commit negative acts, and make sure your conduct does not become ostentatious.

3) The third point, not being biased, refers to the following. Some practitioners can tolerate harms from humans but not from nonhumans; they are obsessed with demonic harms. For others the reverse is true. Some practitioners are respectful toward important people but bully the weak. Some are affectionate toward their family but hostile toward outsiders. Others train their mind in relation to sentient beings but not in relation to elemental spirits. These attitudes are all biased. Train your mind to be free of such discriminations.

Transform your attitudes but remain as you are.

While practicing the exchange of self and others and reflecting on this yoga—not divorced from it for even a single instant in your thought or in your physical and verbal conduct—you must nonetheless maintain your conduct the way it was before, with no radical shift. For instance, do not recite [mind training sayings to show off] in others' presence, but strive to conform with others. Maintain your normal level of spiritual activity, and leave your external behaviors unchanged. Some people, after hearing the teaching, become fickle, discarding their past manner and practices. This is tantamount to forsaking your past, which is extremely inappropriate. Since it is taught that your mind training should be discreet yet powerful, ripen your mind without others noticing.

Do not speak of the defects of others.

This states that you should never speak of others' defects—neither their worldly defects, for instance by saying "that blind person," nor their spiritual defects, for instance by saying "that morally degenerate person."

Do not reflect on others' shortcomings.

It is inappropriate to ruminate on the shortcomings of sentient beings in general and particularly of those who have entered the monastic order, especially your fellow practitioners. At minimum, you should be joyful toward them, for you are training the mind. Even if you happen to feel that certain associates may be ill chosen, since you are training the mind, contemplating others' shortcomings is inappropriate. If you lapse and find yourself noticing another's shortcoming, think, "This is my own deluded perception; no such flaw exists in them. All sentient beings are endowed with the essence that shares the Buddha's own nature." Reflect in this manner and judge this perception to be your own flaw.

Discard all expectations of reward.

Discard all expectations, such as admiration for your mind training; material gifts, services, and fame; protection from harm caused by nonhumans in this and future lives; the attainment of a joyful human or heavenly existence; and the attainment of nirvana. Ensure that you have no expectation even of buddhahood for your own sake. Do not harbor impatience and excessive hope even for the meditative qualities, for were the demons to learn of this, they could create obstacles. Even if you

exert strong effort with no ebbing of interest for a long time but still get no results, do not get discouraged.

Discard poisonous food.

[Poisonous food is] self-interest harbored in the depths of your heart. Never fail to perceive self-grasping as the enemy, nor fail to release self-cherishing and the thoughts that grasp at the substantial reality of things. These make everything you do into a cause of cyclic existence, binding you within cyclic existence and giving rise to suffering. Since these are all like poisonous food, you must discard them.

Do not maintain [inappropriate] loyalty.

This means you should not refrain from condemning acts of injustice committed by others while holding them accountable [out of a misplaced sense of loyalty].

Do not torment with malicious banter.

Whatever tasks befall you, do not indulge in malicious jibes that tear at others' hearts or cause them to lose their composure. Regardless of their culpability, avoid insulting and speaking harshly to others—whether close or distant, good or bad.

Do not lie in ambush.

Do not harbor vengeance for a wrong done to you, waiting for an opportune moment to retaliate.

Do not strike at the heart.

Toward both humans and nonhumans, avoid delving into their weaknesses. With nonhumans, for instance, avoid uttering fierce life-extracting mantras; and in the case of humans, avoid exposing their moral lapses, for instance, in situations where many people are around.

Do not place the load of a dzo onto an ox.

Avoid such negative behavior as attempting, by devious means, to shift blame and liabilities onto others that would otherwise fall on you.

Do not sprint to win a race.

Avoid such behavior as attempting, through unbecoming conduct and other means, to transfer the ownership of commonly owned objects to yourself. You should not be in a state of craving when you die, and since the "other shore" will arise in any case because of karma, it is far more joyful to let go with a sense of ease, the master said.

Do not abuse this [practice] as a rite.

There is no qualitative difference between someone who, seeking long-term well-being, accepts certain loss in the interim and someone who engages in mind training as a ritual with the long-term motivation to conquer demonic harms. Therefore avoid behavior such as this that fails to root out the jaundice of self-centeredness from its depth. Some practitioners seem to think that mind training practice is beneficial for such a result or purpose. If this is true, there is no real difference between practicing mind training and engaging in shamanistic rites. To

be called Dharma practice, mind training must become an antidote to afflictions and false conceptualization.

Do not turn the gods into demons.

When displeased, the worldly gods cause harm. The gods are supposed to be beneficial in general; so if they cause harm, they then become demons. Similarly, mind training is supposed to subdue self-grasping. Avoid, therefore, becoming inflated by its practice and generating conceited thoughts such as, "I am an excellent practitioner of mind training; others lack this spiritual practice." Avoid ridiculing and insulting others out of a sense of superiority. If you strengthen your grasping at the self-existence of phenomena, your practice becomes an endeavor of the enemy. It becomes the act of allowing a thief to escape into the forest while tracking his footprints on a rocky mountain. Avoid all such conduct, and by defaming self-grasping, ensure that the medicine is applied right where the illness is. Comport yourself as the lowest of the low among the servants of all sentient beings.

Do not seek misery as a means to happiness.

This means not drawing personal gratification from others' miseries. Do not, for example, harbor thoughts such as, "If my spouse or this particular friend dies, there will then be no other family member left [so I will inherit everything]," "If the wealthy benefactor becomes ill or dies, I will have the opportunity to accumulate merit and roots of virtue," "If my meditator colleague of this region dies, I alone will have the opportunity to accumulate merit," and "If this enemy dies, I will enjoy happiness." The master said that since sentient beings experience their own individual merits, due to karma you will find enemies and friends no matter where you go.

VII. Presentation of the precepts of mind training

Since your mind training will not degenerate but will instead be enhanced to progressively higher levels if you put the following teachings into practice, strive in them.

Accomplish all yogas through a single means.

Other spiritual practices have their own particular dietary requirements, modes of conduct, and so on, in addition to their yogic practices. For those like you who have entered the door of mind training, however, solely keeping in mind this mind training advice is sufficient to ensure all other practices, such as those pertaining to food. So you should engage in this practice.

Overcome all errors through a single means.

Some who are under Māra's influence fail to develop confidence in this spiritual practice. They experience the false perceptions of misguided meditation practice, with thoughts like: "Since I began practicing mind training, illnesses have increased, harms from demons have increased, people have become more hostile, and afflictions such as self-grasping have increased as well." Based on such thoughts, or for no particular reason, they lose enthusiasm for mind training and are in danger of turning away. If this happens to you, become aware of it right there and then and think, "A misguided meditative practice has arisen in me." With a second thought, reflect, "There must be many like me in the universe whose thoughts have deviated from true Dharma practice," and take all of these deviations upon yourself and offer your body, wealth, and virtues to others. Imagine that because of this, the thoughts of those others turn toward the Dharma, and these others enter the unmistaken path.

There are two tasks—one at the start and one at the end.

In the morning, after getting up, set forth the thought, "Throughout this day I will be sure to avoid becoming tainted by the clinging of self-cherishing. I will make sure my thoughts cherishing others do not degenerate." Then, during the day, remain sustained by the vigilance that accompanies everyday activity.

When going to bed at night, while in the meditative absorption "lion's majestic pose," sequentially review the day by recalling, "First I did this, then I did that, and so on." If you detect any transgression, it is stated, "At that instant enumerate your flaws / and recall your teacher's instructions." Then cultivate the following thought: "Isn't it amazing that there are people like me who waste their precious human existence and bring harm upon themselves!" Thinking thus, appeal for forbearance, declare and purify your negative karma, and cultivate the resolve to forsake this in the future. If you have not committed any transgression, then rejoice, thinking, "I have indeed made my human existence meaningful." Dedicate the virtues toward the aspiration to realize this practice in your mental continuum. Also make the aspiration prayer, "May I never be divorced from the two awakening minds throughout all my lives."

Whichever of the two arises, be patient.

If you suddenly come into a great fortune, do not become arrogant or become attached to it; make sure you do not fall prey to the eight mundane concerns. Take this good fortune as a basis for your Dharma practice. Some people who attract followers and material gifts become conceited by this; they then despise

others and do whatever comes to mind. You must discard such behavior.

Likewise, if you experience misfortune such that the only thing that seems beneath you is the water [flowing under a bridge], do not become depressed or demoralized, wondering how "such an unfortunate person like me" could exist. Do not be so downcast you are incapable of training the mind. Instead reflect, "Compared to the disparity in degree and intensity between the happiness of the higher realms and the suffering of the lower realms, the disparity between pleasant and unpleasant human states is not so immense. So, without distracting myself further, I will focus on my spiritual practices." For it is taught:

Even if you are prosperous like the gods, Pray do not be conceited. Even if you become as destitute as a hungry ghost, Pray do not be disheartened.⁸³

Guard the two even at the cost of your life.

These are (1) the precepts and commitments presented in the teachings in general and (2) the commitments of this particular mind training teaching, such as "Do not speak of the defects [of others]." Since even the mundane happiness of this present life will elude you if these two commitments become degenerate, hold them more dearly than your life.

Train in the three difficult challenges.

When eliminating the afflictions, in the beginning it can be difficult to remember the antidotes, in the middle it can be difficult to overcome the afflictions, and at the end it can be difficult

to eradicate the continuum of the afflictions. Therefore make sure you accomplish these three without great difficulty. To train, in the morning put on the armor with respect to all three stages. When the afflictions actually arise, recall their antidotes, counter them, and cultivate the resolve, "From here on I will not allow the afflictions to arise in my mind."

Adopt the three principal conditions.

(1) There should be a qualified spiritual teacher who possesses the pith instructions and is endowed with higher realizations. The bond [between the teacher and you] should be so close that no dog can come between, and the teacher should be pleased with you. (2) Your state of mind should be such that [many realizations have arisen]—from [the rarity of] precious human existence to [the understanding of] no-self—and these should have arisen just as contemplated or as taught by your teacher. (3) Conditions conducive to Dharma practice must be gathered—such as faith, intelligence, joyous effort, a strong sense of disenchantment, food and clothing, and other necessities.

Since these three are the principal conditions of Dharma practice, if you possess them, rejoice and strive diligently to enhance them. If you do not possess them, contemplate: "How sad! The vast expanse of the universe must contain countless others like me who lack these three factors and have failed in their Dharma practice." Thinking thus, take upon yourself all their deficiencies. As you offer your body and so on to them, imagine they obtain the three conditions and that all experience the Great Vehicle.

Contemplate the three that are free of degeneration.

Since all the attainments of the Mahayana depend upon the student's faith and respect [toward his or her teacher], make sure you are never divorced at any time from the perception of your teacher as a buddha. In this manner, make sure that your faith and respect toward your spiritual teacher remain undiminished. Furthermore, with the thought "This mind training teaching represents the quintessence of Mahayana and is like a potent seed of buddhahood," engage in this incomparable practice. Thus make sure your enthusiasm for mind training remains undiminished. As for the pledges of the Great and Lesser vehicles you have taken, you should, by sailing the great ship of shame and conscientiousness, which are the true antidotes, learn to guard them undiminished, not tainted by even the slightest infractions.

Be endowed with the three inseparable factors.

Make sure that your body is never divorced from such virtuous acts as offering services to your spiritual teachers, making offerings to the Three Jewels, offering torma cakes to the Dharma protectors and the elemental spirits, making prostrations, performing circumambulation, and so on. Make sure that your speech is never divorced from such virtuous acts as reciting verses on taking refuge, repeating mantras, and doing recitations. Make sure that your mind is never divorced from the two awakening minds and is endowed with inconceivable courage to vanquish all the conceptualizing afflictions, such as self-cherishing. In brief, make sure your body, speech, and mind are never divorced from virtuous activity at all times.

Train constantly toward the chosen objects.

It is said that the tendency to get angry and vengeful toward

enemies and adversaries right to their faces is exacerbated by frequent interactions. Thus, from one angle, there is a real risk of losing your mind training in relation to those who harbor ill-will against you even though you have caused them no harm, and those you find unpleasant even though they harbor no ill-will toward you. Therefore single these people out for special focus, and train your mind by perceiving them as parts of your own heart. Furthermore, because your spiritual teachers, parents, and bodhisattvas are objects of special significance—the fruitional effects are inconceivably grave if you accumulate negative karma in relation to them—single them out [for special focus] and engage in the training.

Do not depend on other conditions.

To engage in other spiritual practices, you have to gather various favorable conditions, such as food, clothing, and so on; you also need to have good health, access to water that is suited to your body, and no excessive disturbances from humans and nonhumans alike. The practice of mind training, in contrast, does not depend on such conditions. Since the very absence of favorable conditions is itself a resource for this spiritual practice, today take all of these as the ripening of meritorious karma and as factors conducive to mind training.

Engage in the principal practices right now.

Since beginningless time you have roamed the three lower realms of existence as if they were your ancestral home. Today, at this juncture, when you have obtained the human existence of leisure and opportunity that is so rarely found in even a billion eons, instead of making all kinds of plans for this life, it is more important to engage in Dharma practice that aims for the

welfare of future lives. Of the two aspects of Dharma, exposition and practice, the latter is more important. Compared to all other meditative practices, the practice of training in the awakening mind is more important. Compared to training the mind by applying the twin paddles of scripture and reasoning, persistently training in applying the appropriate antidotes on the basis of your teacher's pith instructions is more important. Compared to other activities, training by remaining seated on your cushion is more important. Compared to avoiding the objects of your afflictions, probing within is more important. It is critical that you train in these points.

Do not apply misplaced understanding.

This refers to the avoidance of six misplaced understandings. If, instead of enduring the hardships entailed in Dharma practice, you endure difficulties when seeking the objects of your desire, nurturing your friends, and subduing your foes—this is misplaced endurance. If, instead of aspiring to purify your negative karma as much as you can, accumulate merit as much as you can, and transform your thoughts as much as you can, you view the excellences of this life as admirable qualities and aspire to them—this is misplaced aspiration. If, instead of savoring your experience of the Dharma through striving in learning, reflection, and meditation, you savor the taste of sensual desire and pursue it and you dwell on and relish memories of past sexual experiences and triumphs over enemies—this is misplaced savoring. If, instead of cultivating compassion for those caught in suffering and its causes, you feel compassion for those who suffer in pursuit of the ascetic life and meditation—this is misplaced compassion. If, instead of cultivating dedication to the privilege of practicing Dharma, you have a sense of dedication to such endeavors as accumulating material wealth, nurturing

friends, and pursuing mundane greatness—this is *misplaced dedication*. If, instead of rejoicing in those—from the buddhas to the sentient beings—who engage in virtue and enjoy its fruit, happiness, you rejoice when misfortune and disaster befall your adversaries—this is *misplaced rejoicing*. You should relate to these six misplaced understandings with appropriate avoidance and affirmation.

Do not be sporadic.

At times you practice mind training while at others you engage in mantra repetitions; on some occasions you forsake both, yet on other occasions you guard both. Relinquish such a sporadic approach. Forsake also such sporadic approaches as sometimes making plans for this mundane life and increasing negative karma and afflictions and sometimes engaging in Dharma practice for the sake of your future life. Without being sporadic, engage in Dharma practice with single-pointed dedication. In particular, practice mind training, for mind training is the innermost essence of Dharma practice.

Train with decisiveness.

When a minor nerve is damaged, you treat it by cutting it clean. In the same way, when you engage in the training of mind, do not remain hesitant but direct your entire mind. You should remain resolute in your decision and train with no hesitation. Avoid such dilettantish attitudes as, "First I will check to see if mind training is beneficial; if not, I will recite mantras." This indicates that you have failed to let go of yearning for [self-centered] happiness; this kind of practice can't even overcome sickness and malevolent possessions.

Be released through the two: investigation and close analysis.

First investigate which affliction is most dominant in your mind and earnestly apply its specific antidote, striving hard to subdue the affliction. Then airalyze the way deluded mental projections arise in relation to the objects that act as their bases. By applying the antidotes, you reduce the force of the afflictions or prevent their arising. By repeatedly thinking, "From here on I will never allow my mindstream to be tainted by these afflictions," you cultivate familiarity with the protective armor for the future. Thus, with these twin methods for applying antidotes to past and future [afflictions], strive diligently to eliminate the afflictions.⁸⁴

Do not boast of your good deeds.85

Don't be boastful and arrogant toward others on any grounds, suggesting, for example, that another person is indebted to you, or that you engage in certain spiritual practices, or that you are learned, or that you are industrious in your ethical discipline, or that you are great, or that your family lineage is excellent. Radrengpa has said, "Don't place too much hope in humans; supplicate the gods instead." In any case, if you have correctly distinguished between enemy and friend, you understand everyone to be a friend. Then even when you work for others' welfare, the jaundice of self-centeredness does not arise. Instead you recognize all such tasks as obligations, so boastfulness toward others simply does not occur. When that happens, your mind has become trained.

Do not be ill-tempered.

Whatever others may have done to you in the past, such as humiliating you or verbally abusing you, the blame lies within you. Do not react to others with twisted facial expressions or abusive words. Even with your mind, restrain yourself from ill-temperedness. Because your Dharma practice has not yet become an antidote to self-grasping, your resilience is at present weak, and your ill temper makes you volatile. Since such behavior makes your Dharma practice ineffective, ensure that your practice becomes an antidote to self-grasping.

Do not be fickle.

Don't respond erratically to situations because of your everchanging moods. This causes great inconvenience to your companions and must therefore be relinquished.

Do not be boisterous.

Avoid seeking fame and praise through expressions of gratitude for assistance you may have rendered others or benefits you may have brought them. In brief, do not desire even to hear compliments for help or assistance rendered to others.

In this manner you should train, your entire life, in the two awakening minds both through meditation sessions and through practice in the periods between sessions. There will then be no basis for dispute and no reason for conflict with the gods, demons, or fellow humans. By putting the gods at peace, making the serpentine nāgas tranquil, and keeping everyone happy as best as possible, when your last breath approaches, you will experience the beginning of true happiness, and you will turn your back on misery and travel from light to light, from joy to joy.

The effects or benefits of these spiritual practices are presented in the following:

Through this proliferation of the five degenerations transform [every event] into the path of enlightenment.

Generally speaking, the teaching of Buddha Śākyamuni emerged in an era when the five degenerations were on the rise. In particular, it has emerged during this present age, the era of the last five-hundred-year cycle, when the types of degeneration are even more severe than the five degenerations. Because of this, sentient beings's thoughts are only afflictions, their actions only negative karma. They relish others' suffering and feel anguished at others' good fortune. Thus with all three doors—body, speech, and mind—sentient beings indulge only in deeds that are harmful to others. It is therefore an era when [harmful] sentient beings have gathered.

Furthermore, those nonhuman agents that admire the positive white force have departed to the pure realms to benefit the bodhisattvas, whereas the strength and force of those who admire the dark side have increased. Because of this, misfortunes plague sentient beings.

Today, therefore, a multitude of adverse conditions cause all kinds of suffering for sentient beings, and myriad obstacles particularly befall those who put the doctrine into practice. So at this time, when adverse conditions compete to form a thicket, if you do not train in this spiritual practice, though you may enter other systems of practice, you will fail to succeed in Dharma practice. On the other hand, if you enter this practice and strive in it, you will transform all adverse conditions into factors conducive for training on the path to enlightenment.

As for other benefits, a year's pursuit of virtuous activities during this age—when the teaching of the Buddha faces pernicious threats—will help you accomplish the accumulations better than eons pursuing virtue in the pure realms. Therefore, those truly capable of training the mind are invulnerable to the

spread of the five degenerations and remain content. If you know how to train the mind, even your body, the body of a mind training yogi, is known as the "city that is a fount of joy." For all happiness—of this and future lives, of self and others—comes about on the basis of this very body.

Strive therefore by concentrating all your efforts in this endeavor. And if you make sure that the teachings are integrated with your mind—that the rule of Dharma is established as firmly as a stake driven through your heart—and that you experience the taste of Dharma, before long you will attain the perfect state, wherein the complete aims of self and others are accomplished. Thus said the master.

To illustrate these points definitively, the author himself wrote the following lines:

Because of my numerous aspirations,
I have defied the tragic tale of suffering
and have taken instructions to subdue self-grasping.
Now, even if death comes, I have no regrets.

These words were uttered as an expression of joy by the highly accomplished yogi Chekawa, who, having presented the method of practice, arrived at a decisively settled state of mind following a clear discrimination between enemy and friend.

Colophon

These words of my teacher, an ocean of goodness delighting everyone:

Through the merit of compiling them with a wish to help others,

may the giant elephant of mind training carry all beings and demolish the solid mountain of egoistic view.

As the rays of your fame pervade all directions, like a magnet attracting all metal objects, stirred by your fame, your disciples remain in your presence; they've beheld your face so rare and have accomplished great aims.

In the sky of the exalted mind of Serlingpa's lineage, though the sun of mind training still shines brilliantly, it is now obscured by clouds of negative conceptualization; the line between gold and worn-out brass has become blurred.

O, those who wish to relinquish the sufferings of self and others, forsake the inferior paths described as incomplete and enter this horse-drawn carriage path of the Conqueror's supreme children.

How can anyone hope to become enlightened without this? A distillation of all scriptures, this innermost essence of Kadam is most wondrous!

Sarva śubham



EIGHT VERSES

AMONG THE FIRST indigenious Tibetan works on mind training to capture the heart of spiritual aspirants in the land of snows is undoubtedly the beautifully concise and moving verse text known as *Eight Verses on Mind Training*. Sometimes referred to also as *Langthangpa's Eight Verses*, the thirty-two lines of this short work encapsulate powerfully the depth of the altruistic ideal and commitment of a spiritual aspirant who is dedicated to the pursuit of bringing about the ultimate welfare of all sentient beings.

Beginning with the critical question of how to view others with a sense of deep gratitude, the text plunges immediately into the heart of the matter—namely, the challenge of how to transform our habitual self-centeredness into a standpoint of valuing and cherishing the welfare of others.

In stanza 2, the author then deals with the more specific question of how to implement this principle of cherishing others' welfare. A key to this, we are told, lies in adopting an appropriate outlook toward self and others, an outlook that shuns viewing others as somehow inferior.

Stanza 3 tells us that, in order for us mind training practioners to put our spiritual ideals into practice, we need first and foremost to find a way to deal with the perennial challenge posed by our habitual afflictive states of mind. Here, Langri Thangpa emphasizes the need to cultivate and apply in our

thoughts and behavior faculties such as mindfulness, greater self-awareness, and heedfulness.

In stanzas 4, 5, and 6, this advice on how to deal with our afflictions is taken further, with special attention given to particular types of people: beings of unpleasant character, those oppressed with negativity, those who treat us wrongly for no good reason, and finally those who disappoint us—people, in other words, who trigger powerful negative reactions in us. These lines clearly resonate with Śāntideva's famous advice to view our enemies as spiritual teachers, for they provide us the rare opportunity to practice the virtue of patience, or forbearance.

Stanza 7 sums up the key principle of mind training—transforming of our thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors to be more other-regarding and altruistic. This is done on the basis of presenting the contemplative practice of *tonglen* (giving and taking), which entails mentally taking upon ourselves all the sufferings of others and their causes, while offering to others our happiness and its causes.

Finally, in stanza 8, we find the instruction on how to ensure that all of the above spiritual exercises do not become sullied by the motives and underlying states of mind driven by self-centered, mundane concerns. The exercises should be grounded instead in an understanding of the deeper nature of reality, so that, finally, free from clinging, we attain genuine freedom from bondage.

In this volume, we provide two slightly different versions of the famed eight verses. First is the "original" version that is embedded in Chekawa's commentary, while the second can be referred to as the "revised" version. The primary difference lies, in the original Tibetan, in the key verb at the end of each stanza. In the original text, we find the phrase "I will train myself to" in relation to practices outlined in each of the eight stanzas. In contrast, the revised version has the phrase "May I," thus trans-

forming the contents of each stanza into a prayer of aspiration rather than a vow to practice. This change was introduced in the twelfth century, soon after the composition of the text, by Sangchenpa. Since the later, revised version is used by all Tibetan teachers today, we have provided this popular version of the text as well.

Langri Thangpa (1054-1123), whose personal name was Dorjé Sengé, was a senior disciple of the Kadam master Potowa Rinchen Sal (1031-1105), one of the three Kadam brothers. He founded Langthang Monastery in Phenpo in central southern Tibet in 1093, which is said to have attracted around two thousand monks during his own lifetime. As noted in my general introduction, Langri Thangpa is famed for the depth of his constant contemplation of the sufferings of all sentient beings, such that he would often be seen with tears rolling down his face. According to the earliest sources, it is Langri Thangpa who first introduced the tradition of sharing the mind training teachings with a wider audience as opposed to the smaller teacher-to-pupil transmission. Langri Thangpa's principal student was Shawo Gangpa, and it is said that the Kagyü master Phakmo Drupa (1110-70) also received teachings from Langri Thangpa.

The commentary on the eight verses featured in this volume is, to date, the earliest known exposition of Langri Thangpa's Eight Verses. Although the colophon of the text explicitly states Master Chekawa, the person who composed the well-known Seven-Point Mind Training, to be its author, the work opens with the statement, in honorific Tibetan, about how the spiritual mentor Chekawa received the instruction on the eight verses from the Kadam master Chakshingwa. Furthermore, the commentary carries the title Eight Verses on Mind Training Together with the Story of Its Origin, which suggests that at least the opening section of the text was added by a later editor.

Given the brevity of the root text of the eight verses, the most important contribution of this commentary is the way it grounds the instructions presented by Langri Thangpa within the context of scriptural sources and illuminates the thought process, or rationale, underlying each of the practices. For example, the commentary links the mind training instructions to specific verses from Santideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, a seminal basis for the development of lojong teachings, as well as lines from other important classical Indian Buddhist texts, such as Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland. In doing so, Chekawa enables us, the readers, to engage not just with the words of Langri Thangpa's important work but, more importantly, with the intent and aims animating this short text.

5. Eight Verses on Mind Training (original) *Langri Thangpa*

With the wish to achieve the highest aim, which surpasses even a wish-fulfilling gem, I will train myself to at all times cherish every sentient being as supreme.

Whenever I interact with others,
I will view myself as inferior to all,
and I will train myself
to hold others as superior from the depths of my heart.

In all my activities I will probe my mind, and as soon as an affliction arises since it endangers myself and others— I will train myself to confront it directly and avert it.

When I encounter beings of unpleasant character and those oppressed by intense negative karma and suffering, as though finding a treasure of precious jewels, I will train myself to cherish them, for they are so rarely found.

When others out of jealousy treat me wrongly with abuse and slander, I will train to take upon myself the defeat and offer to others the victory.

Even if someone I have helped or in whom I have placed great hope gravely mistreats me in hurtful ways, I will train myself to view him as my sublime teacher.

7 In brief, I will train myself to offer benefit and joy to all my mothers, both directly and indirectly, and respectfully take upon myself all the hurts and pains of my mothers.

8
By ensuring that all this remains unsullied
by the stains of the eight mundane concerns,
and by understanding all things as illusions,
I will train myself to be free of the bondage of clinging.

Eight Verses on Mind Training (revised)

With the wish to achieve the highest aim, which surpasses even a wish-fulfilling gem, for the benefit of all sentient beings, may I hold them dear at all times.

Whenever I interact with another, may I view myself as the lowest among all and, from the very depths of my heart, hold others as superior.

In all my activities may I probe my mind, and as soon as an affliction arises—since it endangers myself and others—may I confront it directly and avert it.

When I encounter beings of unpleasant character and those oppressed by intense negativity and suffering, as though finding a treasure of precious jewels, may I cherish them, for they are so rarely found.

When others out of jealousy treat me wrongly with abuse and slander, may I take upon myself the defeat and offer to others the victory.

6
Even if someone I have helped
or in whom I have placed great hope
gravely mistreats me in hurtful ways,
may I view him as my sublime teacher.

7 In brief, may I offer benefit and joy to all my mothers, both directly and indirectly, and may I quietly take upon myself all the hurts and pains of my mothers.

8
May all of this remain unsullied
by the stains of the eight mundane concerns,
and, by understanding all things as illusions,
free of clinging, may I be released from bondage.

6. A Commentary on "Eight Verses on Mind Training" Chekawa Yeshé Dorjé

HEREIN IS Eight Verses on Mind Training together with the story of its origin.

I pay homage to the sublime teachers!

Geshe Chekawa once remarked, "My admiration for the Kadampas first arose when I heard the eight verses from Chakshingwa." Thereafter I studied the verses and meticulously memorized the words, repeating them until I arrived at Lungshö Gegong, yet I failed to realize their meaning in my heart. For if these verses had entered my heart, things would have been quite different by then. Nonetheless, whenever the fear of being attacked [by bandits and such] appeared in my mind during my journey, I reflected upon these verses and this helped. Also I was often in situations where I had to seek shelter with strangers when my mind turned wild and untamed. During times when I was confronted with seemingly unbearable situations, such as failing to secure a suitable shelter, or when I became the target of others' disparagement, these verses helped me."

What verses are these? They are the following eight verses:

With the wish to achieve the highest aim, which surpasses even a wish-fulfilling gem,

I will train myself to at all times cherish every sentient being as supreme.

In general, in order to train yourself to view each sentient being as a wish-fulfilling gem, recall two similarities shared by sentient beings and the precious gem. First if you submerge the wish-fulfilling gem in a muddy mire, the gem cannot cleanse itself of the mud; however, if you wash it with scented water on a full-moon day, adorn the tip of a victory banner with it, and make offerings to it, the gem can then become a source of all earthly wishes. In the same way, sentient beings afflicted with the various defects of cyclic existence cannot free themselves from the mire of this unenlightened state, nor can they wash away their sufferings and the origins of these sufferings. However, with our help, all the benefits, both immediate and ultimate, can issue from them. Without sentient beings, how would you obtain even the immediate benefits—these would cease immediately; even ultimate happiness arises in relation to sentient beings. It is on the basis of sentient beings that you attain the unsurpassable state of buddhahood.

Second, in particular:

Whenever I interact with others,
I will view myself as inferior to all,
and I will train myself
to hold others as superior from the depths of my heart.

As stated here, wherever we are and whomever we interact with, we should train to view ourselves, in all possible ways, as lower and to respect others from the depths of our heart. "Others" encompasses those who are higher than us, such as our spiritual teachers; those who are equal to us, such as our fellow monks; and those who are inferior to us, such as beggars. "In all re-

spects" refers to our family ancestry, cognitive ability, and similar factors. We should reflect upon our own shortcomings in relation to these factors and avoid becoming proud. Thinking, "They all belong to the lowly class of butchers," we tend to generate pride on the basis of our physical appearance and walk as if we possess a skin akin to the color of rusted gold. So we are not even worthy of a sentient being's gaze!

With respect to our cognitive abilities, if we feel proud despite our commonplace lack of distinction, reflect, "I am ignorant of every one of the five fields of knowledge. Even in those fields where I have listened with care and attention, I fail to discern when I miss certain words and their explanations. In my behavior, too, though I am known to be a monk, there are hardly any negative deeds I have not committed. Even at this very moment, my thoughts embody the three poisons, and my actions of body, speech, and mind remain mostly impure. Therefore, in the future, it will be difficult to attain birth in the higher realms, let alone liberation."

Śāntideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life states:

By this type of behavior, even the human form will not be obtained; if I fail to achieve human existence, there is only evil and no virtue.⁸⁸

In this manner we should contemplate all our shortcomings and reflect, "Nothing falls beneath me but this river," and diminish our conceit and learn to respect others. This suggests that whenever we perceive positive qualities in others, or perceive qualities pertaining to family ancestry, physical appearance, material resources, or spiritual realizations such as the six perfections, we should think, "How wondrous indeed that they possess these qualities despite their flawed natures!" If, instead,

they lack these qualities, we should reflect, "Who knows what higher qualities they may actually possess?" Here the story of the ugly mendicant is told.⁸⁹

"From the depths" or the very bone "of my heart" indicates that our thoughts should not remain in our mouth as mere words. Instead, if we have the intention "I will regard all beings as my family without discriminating on the basis of their family background," even the noble Avalokiteśvara will applaud us with the statement, "O child of noble family, this is excellent!" Just as, when the earth is leveled, oceans form upon it and draw forth the waters, the supramundane qualities flourish in the hearts of those free of pride. Therefore the *Condensed Perfection of Wisdom* states:

Abide as if you were a servant of all beings.90

In essence, the three scriptural collections are a means to vanquish conceit. When we think we are exceptional, we are unable to live in harmony with others even in this present life. As for its detrimental consequences in the next life, it is said:

Some ignorant ones, due to the force of their conceit, take birth in the lower realms and in places bereft of leisure:

they take birth as paupers or among the lowly castes; and they become blind, weak, or possessed of a vile demeanor.

[Because of conceit] our tendency for afflictions will deepen, and we will generate intense afflictions relative to those we deem below us. There is even a consequence more serious than this: we will fail to attain enlightenment. For it is written:

The bodhisattva who is conceited remains far away from enlightenment.⁹¹

So all the states of inferiority, degeneration, and suffering within the bounds of mundane existence arise from grasping at our own self as most precious. In contrast, all the joys—both mundane and supramundane—originate from sentient beings. We should therefore perceive all sentient beings as embodiments of higher qualities and vanquish our pride.

Third, since the afflictions impede us from proceeding in the above manner, eliminate them as follows:

In all my activities I will probe my mind, and as soon as an affliction arises since it endangers myself and others— I will train myself to confront it directly and avert it.

Training ourselves to examine our mental continuum in all our activities and averting the afflictions as soon as they arise is as follows: Whichever of the four everyday activities we engage in, 92 with mindfulness and vigilance, we should analyze whether thoughts such as attachment arise in our mind. With the thought "I will relinquish them the instant they arise," we should level them flat by observing them in this manner. Instead, if we act like an elderly couple being robbed by a thief, we procrastinate and then nothing happens. If afflictions proliferate in our mental continuum, emotions like anger will also increase exponentially. A sutra states:

Likewise, those who place their faith in sleep will procrastinate and fall further into slumber. This is true also of those who are lustful and those who crave intoxicants.

Our tendency for afflictions will deepen, and we will experience intense afflictions toward all we deem below us. A more serious consequence is that we ourselves will experience acute suffering. If we relinquish the afflictions, their propensities too will become lighter. The past propensities will weaken, and only subtle propensities will be created anew toward desirable objects. Since the law of cause and effect is subtle, the effects will definitely be realized in our experience. So we should view the afflictions as our enemies and enhance the power of their antidotes.

Śāntideva states:

I may be slain or burned alive; likewise I may be decapitated; under no circumstance will I bow before my enemy, the afflictions.⁹³

As stated here, the conventional enemy can harm us only in this world and not beyond, but the enemy that is our afflictions can injure us throughout all our lives. As it is said:

This enemy of mine, the afflictions, is long-lived, with neither beginning nor end; no other enemies can endure in this manner for so long.⁹⁴

Furthermore, when we surrender to our conventional enemies, they no longer harm us and may actually benefit us. If we give in to the afflictions in the same manner, however, they become even more destructive. As it is said:

If you relate to your enemies with friendship and gifts, these bring benefit and happiness.

However, if you appease the afflictions, it brings ever more suffering and injury.95

Furthermore, conventional enemies harm only our body, life, and wealth, whereas the afflictions create immeasurable suffering in this cycle of existence. As it is said:

Even were all the gods and demigods to rise up against me as my enemies, they could not drag me and cast me into the blazing fire of the eternal hells.

Yet this powerful enemy, my afflictions, can fling me instantly where even mighty Mount Meru would be crushed to dust on contact.⁹⁶

So view the afflictions as our enemy and discard them. While conventional enemies can return and cause harm even after they have been banished, the afflictions enemy cannot resurface once it has been eradicated. It is like burnt seeds. The method for eliminating them is through conduct, meditation, and view.⁹⁷

For beginners, given the weakness of their antidotes and their difficulty in countering afflictions that have already arisen, they must relinquish them first through their conduct. As for meditation, it is said that each affliction has a corresponding antidote. Since whatever meditative practice we undertake from among the three scopes becomes a remedy against all the afflictions, it is appropriate to engage in this practice. As our mental level advances, since afflictions are devoid of objects, it is sufficient simply to recognize that this is so. Thus there remains nothing to eliminate. Santideva states:

Afflictions! Afflictions! Relinquish them with your eyes of insight.98

Fourth, training ourselves to regard beings of unpleasant character and those oppressed by powerful negative karma and suffering with special care and as something rarely found is presented in the following:

When I encounter beings of unpleasant character and those oppressed by intense negative karma and suffering, as though finding a treasure of precious jewels, I will train myself to cherish them, for they are so rarely found.

"Beings of unpleasant character" refers to those like the king Asanga, 99 who, not having accumulated merit in the past, experience the arising of afflictions without even a trace of control. It also refers to beings such as the person who, while crossing a mountain pass, was given a plate of meat stew: When the food burned his lips, he tossed the full plate away along with the pan and bellowed, "You dare burn me!" "Intense negative karma" refers to the five heinous crimes, degeneration of the vows, and misappropriation of offerings made to the Three Jewels. "Those oppressed by intense . . . suffering" refers to those who are afflicted by leprosy, other serious illnesses, and so on.

We should not treat them as our enemies, saying, "We cannot even look at them, and we must never allow them to come near us." Rather we should feel compassion toward them, as though they were being led away by the king's executioners. Even if some among them are morally degenerate, we should feel, "What can I do to help them?" until our tears flow freely. This means that we should first console them with words, and if this

proves ineffective, we should provide for their material needs and render help to cure their illness. If this, too, is unsuccessful, we should sustain them in our thoughts, and in action we should protect them even with shelter. Some people, thinking, "This will not benefit the other, but it could harm me," cover their noses and walk away from those oppressed by acute suffering. Even so, there is no certainty that such suffering will never befall us. Therefore, in our actions, we should provide others with food, medicine, and the like, while with our thoughts we should contemplate the following and train the mind:

Whatever sufferings beings have, may they all ripen upon me. 100

The line "I will train myself to cherish them, for they are so rarely found" is explained as follows. Since it is rare to find a precious gem, we do not discard it but rather keep it and cherish it. In the same way, beings of unpleasant character are not so easy to find; yet in dependence upon them compassion arises, and in dependence upon them the awakening mind arises. Without making deliberate efforts, it is rare to encounter such objects as these that allow us to develop the Mahayana paths. Why? Because the noble ones and those with worldly excellence do not arouse our compassion, so they cannot help us enhance the awakening mind. They cannot therefore lead us to the attainment of buddhahood. This is stated in the following:

Except for the awakening mind, the buddhas do not uphold any means. 101

Fifth, training ourselves to accept the defeat without resentment, even when faced with slander and other injustices, is presented in the following:

When others out of jealousy treat me wrongly with abuse and slander, I will train to take upon myself the defeat and offer to others the victory.

Whether or not we are at fault, if others slander us or malign us out of jealousy or other motives, instead of harboring resentment, we should respond with a gentle mind. Free of resentment, we should refrain from claiming, for instance, "I am innocent. Others are to blame." Like Langri Thangpa, we should take the defeat upon ourselves. It is said that whenever misfortunes befell another, he would say, "I too am in him." When we engage in charity and ethical discipline at present, we do so to purify our negative karma and accumulate merit. If we recognize those who slander us as sources of kindness, although this is not a substitute for the aforementioned two activities, it nevertheless cleanses us of resentment and purifies our negative karma, the master said. Taking the defeat upon ourselves prevents us from adding to our negative karma.

Langri Thangpa states, "When it comes to purifying negative karma and accumulating merit, it is more effective to recognize those who baselessly slander you as great sources of kindness than it is to offer buttery delicacies to every monk in Phenyül." A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life states:

Since it is in dependence upon his malign intention that forbearance arises, it's really he who is the cause of forbearance; like the true Dharma, he is worthy of veneration. 103

To substantiate this assertion, Śāntideva states in the following that forbearance is more powerful than ethical discipline:

There is no negativity like anger, and there is no virtue like forbearance....¹⁰⁴

This presents the forbearance of being unperturbed by harms. 105 Sixth is the forbearance of voluntarily accepting suffering. When someone to whom we have rendered help in the past, or in whom we have placed great hope, betrays or slanders us, we should contemplate him as our teacher with a sense of gratitude. This is presented in the following:

Even if someone I have helped or in whom I have placed great hope gravely mistreats me in hurtful ways,
I will train myself to view him as my sublime teacher.

As for expectation, Dromtönpa once remarked, "In Kham, I went to visit the teacher Sherap Bar, a spiritual friend close to my heart. I went knowing he had not invited me, and he took offense at this and sent me away from his presence. He ordered others to remove all my belongings, and had me locked in a dark room. That was when it became clear whether I had trained my mind in loving-kindness and compassion, and whether the lines 'May these sufferings ripen upon me, / and may all my happiness ripen upon them' had remained a lie for me." So we must never retaliate with resentment.

Furthermore, relating this to our own situation, were it not for sordid karma, such events would not befall us. As it has been said:

Previously I caused harms such as these to other sentient beings, so it is right that today such injuries befall me, I who have harmed others.¹⁰⁷

We should think that we ourselves are to blame [for whatever befalls us]; and in this manner, by maintaining a warm heart, we remain happy. And because we do not transfer the blame to others, they too remain happy. We should reflect, "This is due to my own karma. It is established that no one harms the noble ones who have eliminated their negative karma." Even from the other's perspective, it is our own negative karma that caused them to injure us. Reflect, "Because of me, he will have to go to the lower realms. I am to blame for this." It has been said:

Impelled by my own karma, others have brought this harm upon me; because of this they'll fall to the pits of hell. So is it not I who has destroyed them? 108

Thus it is appropriate to protect these beings from their suffering. Again, it is said:

Those who falsely accuse me, And others who cause me harm, Likewise those who insult me: May they all share in enlightenment.¹⁰⁹

Also:

Even if others return kindness with harm, I will practice responding with great compassion; the most excellent beings of this world answer injury with benevolence.¹¹⁰

"To view them as spiritual teachers while thinking of their great kindness" refers to the following: Our spiritual teachers are embodiments of great kindness, for they bestow on us the vows, provide us with the methods of meditative practice, and reveal to us the path to liberation. Of course, if we fail to contemplate this and fail to guard this contemplation, we will not tread the path. So reflect, "What this being has given me helps purify my negative karma and accomplish my accumulations. He has therefore benefited me. So I must view him as my spiritual teacher, no different from the one who has conferred on me the oral transmissions of the meditative practices." In this respect, *Songs of Bliss*¹¹¹ states:

Whether someone is foe or friend—these objects that give rise to afflictions—he who sees them as spiritual teachers will be joyful wherever he resides.

When such thoughts arise spontaneously, our mind is trained; then, even if we have no other practice, whatever acts we engage in turn into the path to enlightenment. This is like the saying, "One cannot find excrement in a land of gold."

Dharma is the transformation of your mind and not the transformation of the external world. For a trained person, even if the three worlds—of humans, celestial gods, and demons—were to rise up as his enemies, his mind would not be afflicted by nonvirtue and suffering. Since no one can vanquish him, he is called a hero.

Seventh, in brief, one must train to offer—both directly and indirectly—all the benefits and joys to our dear mother sentient beings and to take all their hurts and pains into the depths of our hearts. This is presented in the following:

In brief, I will train myself to offer benefit and joy to all my mothers, both directly and indirectly,

and respectfully take upon myself all the hurts and pains of my mothers.

"In brief" refers to condensing all the preceding points. "Respectfully" suggests that we take these into the depths of our hearts while contemplating the kindness of our mothers. In other words, we should practice giving and taking not merely in words but from the depths of our hearts. In practice, if we give away such causes of well-being as food, medicine, and so on while taking upon ourselves all the hurts and pains of sentient beings, this is a cause for achieving birth in higher realms and attaining definitive goodness. 112 If, however, we are not yet able to actually practice this, we should instead perform the taking mentally by engaging in the meditation of giving and taking and dedicating all our joys of this life. When making aspiration prayers, we should utter from the depth of our hearts the following lines from A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life:

My own happiness and others' suffering— If I do not thoroughly exchange them, I will not become fully enlightened; in this cyclic existence, too, I'll find no joy.¹¹³

Eighth, since in all these practices it is possible to become defiled, we should make sure that they remain untainted by even the slightest mundane consideration of this life, and with the awareness that recognizes all phenomena as illusion-like, we should train to be utterly free of attachment. This is presented in the following:

By ensuring that all this remains unsulfied by the stains of the eight mundane concerns, and by understanding all things as illusions,
I will train myself to be free of the bondage of clinging.

Thus the remedy—the method—is this. When tainted with mundane concerns such as the desire to be perceived by others as praiseworthy, we fall under the influence of the eight mundane concerns, and our pursuits become those of self-interest. When this occurs, then the sacred teachings have been turned into demons. If we understand these mundane concerns as akin to illusions, later we will relinquish them. Nothing within our present experience possesses substantial reality.

So among these empty phenomena, what is there to gain or to lose? Who provides you with what service? And who subjects you to insults?

From whence do pleasure and pain arise? What is there to be sad or joyful about?¹¹⁴

And further,

That all things are just like space, I, for one, shall accept. 115

As for supplicating all [objects of refuge] and reciting this as an aspiration, it is as follows: We should make mandala offering to the teachers and the Three Jewels and make the following supplication:

"If you—my teachers, the buddhas of the three times, and all the bodhisattvas—possess blessings and compassion; if you the ten male and ten female wrathful deities—possess power and might; and if you—the wisdom dakinis—possess strength

and abilities, bless me so that the meaning of these eight verses will be realized in me. Bless me so that all the suffering and causes of suffering of all sentient beings ripens upon me and that all the fruits of my awakening mind ripen upon all beings." We thus train by relating in this way to the four truths. 116

Whatever virtuous actions, such as these mind training practices, we may perform, afterward we should recite this aspiration prayer of the eight verses. Making such an aspiration creates propensities for the awakening mind. We should recite the following aspiration prayer: "To such activities of root virtue I will dedicate all my time—all my months and all my years. In the future, too, I will make sure to encounter spiritual teachers and to associate with virtuous companions." We should recite these prayers of aspiration regularly.

This commentary on the eight verses of the bodhisattva Langri Thangpa was composed by Chekawa Yeshé Dorjé. This commentary on the root verses constitutes a profound instruction on mind training. Please strive in this. May its realization arise in the hearts of all.



EQUANIMITY

In MOST TIBETAN sources, including Mind Training: The Great Collection, the short text Leveling Out All Conceptions is attributed to Serlingpa, the teacher from whom Atisa is said to have received the instructions on mind training on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It is difficult to determine how far to accept this traditional Tibetan attribution. In the colophon at the end of commentary, this attribution appears to have come from an account given by Master Atisa. The text itself has a decidedly authoritative voice, and its literary style suggests a certain antiquity. Interestingly, if the attribution to Serlingpa is correct, it suggests that this teaching was given at the behest of Atisa as he was planning his journey to Tibet, and the expression "barbarian borderlands" it mentions was probably meant to allude to Tibet.

As its title suggests, the centeral theme of this short text seems to be challenging our habitual thought patterns and their underlying assumptions. The work opens with what might be understood as the four principal objectives of a spiritual practitioner: (1) leveling out all conceptions, (2) engaging the forces of all the antidotes, (3) concentrating all aspirations into a single point, and (4) seeking the path where all paths converge. A key injunction in leveling out all conceptions is to engage the antidote the moment a conception arises. As made clear in the commentary, this means we do not allow ourselves to be swept away by the undertow of habitual thought processes. We are