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CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class One: Eight Verses of Diamond Lion, Part One

LO JONG Means Developing the Good Heart

ལོ་ཇོང་།

LO JONG **Mental Training, or Developing the Good Heart.** *Jong* can mean “to mind training make pure,” as in *jong-chub* (Buddha); or to “practice something” like football. Developing a good heart suggests a kind of radical behavior modification. It is meant to be used at work, with your family and in your life all day long. It is a major change in how you relate with other people, and it’s much more difficult than Buddhist logic and philosophy. It’s like a feeling of being in an airplane with others and the plane is going to crash and you all know that you’re in it together. The people all around us are suffering and dying. You’re going to lose everyone you love and everything you ever worked for. You have to *jong* this feeling – to practice or develop the feeling all day long of loving other people around you who are dying and losing all the good things they have. Yet we waste our time struggling to get things we want for ourselves that we will lose anyway. There is no point to this selfish approach you have to life. You have to change your heart. Why not be good to each other? It takes a lot of practice.

LO JONG also Means Developing the Wish for Enlightenment

ལྷང་རྒྱ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

Changkya Rinpoche (1642-1714) was part of the Changkya lineage of lamas who were teachers of the Chinese emperors. The correct peaceful connection between China and Tibet is the shared practice of Buddhism. He is a former life of Pabongka Rinpoche, but when Pabongka Rinpoche was teaching in Tibet (in the early twentieth century) he was not identified as the Changkya Rinpoche due to the dangerous relations with China. Changkya Rinpoche defined *lojong* as the following:

སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་གྲང་རི་ཐང་པ་རྩོུ་མིང་གས་

SEMPA CHENPO LANGRI TANGPA DOR - JE SENG-GE
bodhisattva great (from a region in Tibet) diamond lion
(king of stone)

པའོད་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་སྦྱོང་གི་གདམས་པ་རྩོགས་བརྒྱད་མར་གྲགས་པ།

DZEPAY JANGCHUB SEM - JONG GI DAMPA TSIK-GYE MAR DRAKPA
he made Buddhahood wish training of religious verses eight fem. we call...
instruction

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Class One, continued

Diamond Lion from the Langri Tangpa region, who was a highly realized bodhisattva, made the Book In Eight Verses, the personal religious instruction on developing the wish to reach Buddhahood to help all beings.

The Eight Verses is a *dampa*, or religious instruction whispered from teacher to student in a very holy moment. At a certain spiritual level, everything you hear becomes a *dampa*. Training (*Jong*) means you have to work hard at it. *Lo* and *sem* both mean mind, thought, or wish, but Chankya Rinposhe calls the Eight Verses a *sem-jong* (rather than *lojong*) to indicate that the goal of Buddhism is to develop the ultimate form of compassion (*jang chub ki sem*, or bodhichitta). This is the attitude of feeling that we are all in the same sinking ship together. We are all dying and losing every good thing we want, so you must be sweet to others and try to love them and help them. This is why we call *lojong* developing the good heart. *Lo* is a code word for bodhichitta which is the wish to reach enlightenment so that you can help other people.

དོན་ལྡན་གསལ་

DOR-JE SENG-GE **Diamond Lion** (1054-1123), the author of one of the most famous diamond lion *lojong* texts called the Eight Verses. He was one of the Kadampas, who were the first generation Buddhists in Tibet. *Lojong* texts were very popular among the Kadampas. He is also called *Geshe Langri Tangpa*, after the plains of Langri, which is his native region. He was a *sem pa chenpo*, a highly realized bodhisattva. He was one of the first *geshes*, which is spiritual friend.

ཚིགས་བརྒྱད་མ།

TSIK - GYE MA *Lojong in the Eight Verses*
verses eight feminine

ལོ་ལྷན་གྱི་རྩ་

LO JONG GYA - TSA **Compendium of Lojong texts**, a collection of *lojong* mind training 100 root text texts by Muchen Konchok Gyeltsen (14th century).

སྤྱི་ཚེན་དགོན་མཚོག་གྱུ་ལ་མཚན།

Diamond Lion Verse 1

Three ways to translate the first of the eight verses:

DAK NI SEMCHEN TAMCHE LA, YISHIN NORBU LE HLAKPAY
me to all sentient beings wishing jewel more precious

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The people around you are more precious than a wishing jewel, a jewel that gives you anything you wish for. There are three different ways to read this verse.

1. You can't conceive of how nice it will be when you get to your tantric enlightenment. Even if someone were to explain it to you, you couldn't even be able to think of it. That's why tantra is secret; it's a self-protecting secret. You can't imagine the process or the steps of the process until it starts happening. We wouldn't even know what to wish for. In that sense, anything that would bring you to tantric enlightenment would be better than a wish-giving gem. The only thing that would bring you to that is your relationships with the people around you all the time. So they are very very precious.

DUN CHOK DUB PAY SAM PA YI, TAK TU CHI PAR DZIN PAR SHOK

They're going to get me to heaven, I love you, thank you, test me, make me learn to be kind.

To attain an ultimate angel's body, you have to do it with other people. You need to be around difficult people, the people you see every day at work, to be a real Buddhist.

2. The state of mind (*bodhichitta*, or ultimate compassion) that wants to reach the highest goal is more precious than a wish-giving gem.

3. Buddhahood itself is better than a wish-giving gem.

Diamond Lion Verse 2

Wherever I am, whoever I'm with, may I see myself as lowest of all, and may I see others as the best. This is not an exercise in low self-esteem. It doesn't mean you should see yourself as bad or incapable. It means that anyone could be an enlightened being; you don't know. According to the scriptures, there should be a few in every crowd. It's no trouble for them to appear to you that way to help you. Among the people you see every day there are a few who are already enlightened, and they are trying very hard to get you enlightened. Try to listen to them, and understand what they are trying to tell you.

Diamond Lion Verse 3

Once in awhile you're going to get upset or have a bad thought in your mind. Stop it immediately. The minute you start to feel bad towards someone. Face it and admit it's your problem. They are suffering the same as you are, and according to the laws of karma, even one moment of slight irritation at someone has profound effects on your future.

Diamond Lion Verse 4

Bad people are hard to find, so try to get the most out of it. According to Master Shantideva, once you learn the secret of Buddhism, which is to stop reacting to them in a bad way, you stop the karma of meeting them again. The best way to get rid of people you don't like is to realize that you have made them that way, and to be kind to them.

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Class Two: Eight Verses of Diamond Lion, Part Two

This teaching is very difficult because your mind won't want to accept it. It's very hard to live the way these verses describe. You are cursed from now on because you'll know the right way to live but you won't want to do it.

Diamond Lion Verse 5

DAK LA SHEN GYI TRAKDOK GI SHE KUR LA SOK MIRIKPAY
me to others by jealousy out of criticize etc. untrue, undeserved

GYONGKA RANG-GI LENPA DANG GYELKA SHEN LA BULWAR SHOK
the loss by yourself take it and the profit others to offer it may I

**Other people, because they're jealous, will say bad things to me out of jealousy, etc.
May I take the loss myself and offer the profit to others with great love and respect.**

You *must* analyze and figure out where the bad things in your life come from, such as a person who criticizes you unjustly. This is wisdom. You must distinguish between how someone is doing something bad to you, versus where they come from in the first place. You must go beyond knowing *how* it happens and figure out *why* it happens. For example, cancer comes from cells that divide uncontrollably, but *why* did you get the cancer? You will never reach paradise until you figure out *why* bad things happen to you. This is the real goal of Buddhism. For example, if we live in a world where we have to see people disrespecting and saying bad things about His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, the reason *why* this is happening is that we haven't been good enough to our Lama ourselves. If you don't like people treating you poorly, then keep your vows perfectly, then you won't have to see these people any more. *This is the hardest teaching to follow.*

Then, in any kind of controversy, competition, problem between two human beings, you decide to take the loss or disadvantage yourself, and give the advantage or gain to others. If you do this people will take advantage of you, but if there is someone in your life who would take advantage of you, the reason is that you have taken advantage of people in the past. The best way to get rid of people who are exploiting you is to serve them, give them what they want, and take the loss yourself. As your bad karma wears out, people who would treat you badly will gradually disappear from your life. But you must keep your vows perfectly, and then everything you want will come. *You don't win by struggling against people.* The approach you've taken so far hasn't worked.

Bodhisattvas have sworn to serve other people and to offer them all of their happiness. This is the only way to be happy yourself. Finally, however, you are required as a bodhisattva to prevent other people from doing misdeeds that would hurt themselves or others. You have to stop others from collecting bad karma that will cause them suffering in the future.

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Class Two, continued

Sooner or later you have to reach the point where you can give up the dearest things on a moment's notice because it's the right thing to do. This is really hard, but it's beautiful and it's perfect, and it's the road to happiness. Don't make any conditions -- do it in every situation. Give away every good thing that you have, even if the other person is being unjust or unreasonable or jealous of you, even if their motivations seem to be bad.

The first Chang-gya Rinpoche says in his commentary that you have to have two attitudes when you take the loss onto yourself. First, you must enjoy it, have a good time, and realize that this act is going to get you to a Buddha paradise. Secondly, don't have any regrets either now or in the future. Whenever your mind questions what you're doing, just say "shut up." *Having regrets destroys the virtue collected by taking the loss yourself.*

Diamond Lion Verse 6

GANG LA DAK GI PEN TAKPAY REWA CHEWA GANGSHIK GI
anybody to me by help they will hopes great and they

SHINTU MIRIK NU-JE NA-ANG SHE-NYEN DAMPAR TAWAR SHOK
really unjustified harm spiritual friend highest see them as may I

If I turn to another person with great hopes that they will help me, and they unjustly hurt me badly, may I see them as my highest spiritual friend, as my Lama.

An office job is a great place to learn the Dharma. Your coworkers are great teachers. The suffering we have in life teaches us the true nature of the kind of samsaric life we live in. The people who do you wrong are generously reminding you how your life in samsara is lousy and nothing but suffering. If a person still exists in your life who can irritate you, it's a barometer of your own state of mind. It's your fault, and you haven't yet reached your Dharma goals.

Diamond Lion Verse 7

DORNA NGU DANG GYUPA YI PEN - DE MANAM KUNLA BUL
in brief directly and indirectly help happiness my mothers give it to them

MAYI NU DANG DUKNGEL KUN SANGWE DAK LA LENPAR SHOK
all of their and suffering all secretly me to take it may I
bad deeds

In brief, may I give help and happiness to all my mothers (all living beings) directly and indirectly; and may I take on to myself secretly all of their bad deeds and suffering.

Any time someone is going to get hurt or someone is going to hurt somebody else, I want it to happen to me, and I'll take it secretly – I won't brag about it, I don't care if anyone

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knows about it, I won't let anyone ever know that I did it. Every time I have a chance I will intercept someone else's problem and make it happen to me instead, and they may never know it. Quietly fix things for other people secretly. And then give them all the good things you can, and don't let them know about it.

The word "indirectly" refers to the practice called *tong-len* where you visualize all the problems that are happening in places that you can't affect directly. Then you visualize taking all those problems into you on your breath, and then you destroy them in one breath. You practice fantasizing about being able to destroy all the troubles of the world, taking all of them onto you. This is especially important to do when you are sick or at the moment of your death. Then your breath goes out like white light or nectar, and spreads to all beings and each atom of your breath brings happiness and all the things that everybody wants.

Diamond Lion Verse 8

DEDAK KUNKYANG CHU GYE KYI TOKPAY DRI-ME MABAK PAK
these all of them ideas eight
practices

CHUNAM GYUMAR SHEPA YI SHENPAY CHINGWA LE DRUL SHOK

All these practices ... [this eighth verse is covered in class three, below]

The "eight ideas" are described in the commentaries as being either the eight worldly thoughts, or as being the eight ways of seeing things as being self-existent.

The Eight Worldly Thoughts

འཇིག་རྟེན་ཚོས་བགྱུད།

JIKTEN CHU GYE The eight worldly thoughts. Diamond Lion says when you do worldly thoughts eight the practices of developing a good heart, don't pollute them with the following eight corrupted thoughts.

རྗེས་བཀུར་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།

1. NYEKUR JUNG NA GA Being happy if you get something, like a car or something you get if be happy music, etc. It means an unreasonable happiness about some worldly thing that will eventually collapse anyway and doesn't merit getting all excited about. It doesn't mean that you should feel guilty when something good comes to you, or that you shouldn't rejoice over doing virtue which will certainly bring you happiness in the future.

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མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།

2. MA JUNG NA MIGA
don't you get it if get upset

Being upset when you don't get something. If you're practicing well, bad karma can start to ripen quickly so don't get upset when things go wrong.

བདེ་བ་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།

3. DEWA JUNG NA GA
feel good you if happy

Being happy if you feel good. A true Dharma person reacts to others with joy and love, independent of how you feel at the time.

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།

4. MA JUNG NA MI GA
don't you if not happy

Being unhappy if you don't feel good. You should do your bodhisattva deeds regardless of whether you are feeling cold or tired or sick, etc.

སྒྲིལ་གྲགས་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།

5. NYENDRAK JUNG NA GA
you get famous you get if happy

Being happy if you become well known. Karma is merciless and infallible. You never get anything good or bad that you didn't create the cause for. So don't get too excited about good or bad things that come to you. Just be pure from now on. Always do the right thing Dharmically.

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།

6. MA JUNG NA MI GA
don't you get it if not happy

Being unhappy if you are not well known, because nobody knows you and nobody cares.

བསྒྲིབ་རྒྱུང་ན་དགའ།

7. TURA JUNG NA GA
get praised get it if happy

Being happy if you get praised. You often get praised for things you don't deserve and blamed for things you had nothing to do with.

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།

8. MA JUNG NA MI GA
don't you get it if not happy

Being unhappy if you don't get praised. Just keep your vows and practice *lojong*, and don't care too much about what is happening to you now.

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Class Three: Eight Extremes, Six Keys, Five Poisons

This class begins by finishing up the Eight Verses of Diamond Lion:

Diamond Lion Verse 8

DEDAK KUNKYANG CHU GYE KYI TOKPAY DRI-ME MABAK PAK
these all of them ideas eight
practices

CHUNAM GYUMAR SHEPA YI SHENPAY CHINGWA LE DRUL SHOK

Don't let your *lojong* practice be polluted by having the eight thoughts;

In all of the things you're doing for others' benefit, you should take the short end of the stick in all situations. Don't begin to compromise or make excuses. Don't let *lojong* get diluted. The reason you're dying is that you've been acting that way. This root *lojong* text was kept secret for several hundred years because it's so hard to actually practice it. It's so against our basic instincts to take the loss on ourselves, especially when we are being treated unjustly.

You must Understand Emptiness to Succeed at Lojong

Changya Rinpoche taught that the eight ideas mentioned in Diamond Lion's eighth verse means that you cannot practice *lojong* unless you understand emptiness. You will fall into the eight worldly thoughts mentioned in last class if you don't understand emptiness.

མཐའ་བརྒྱད།

TA GYE
extremes eight

Eight wrong ideas -- extremes, or cliffs you can fall off. It means eight wrong understandings about emptiness which will pollute your *lojong* practice. It's dangerous to try to practice *lojong* without understanding emptiness. You'll probably fail and it will be painful.

ངོ་བོས་གྲུབ་པ།

NGOWA DRUPPA
essential to exist
nature

To exist by their essential nature. It means the idea that things could exist from their own side, through some nature of their own. For example, the wrong idea that this blue and white cylinder is a pen from its own side.

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Class Three, continued

The Eight Extremes

These eight extremes come from Arya Nagarjuna's *Mulaprajñā*.

མགྲོ་བ།

1. **KYEWA MEPA** **Things don't start from their own side.** For example, you can pay your rent with money only because of the similar karma that you and your landlord have to see this paper by convention as being valuable. The paper itself is worthless, and the fact that you helped to take care of people in the past allows you to see your pile of paper being accepted in return for a place to stay. So no good object in your life ever *begins* for any reason except that you did a similar good thing for someone else in the past.

འགག་པ།

2. **GAKPA MEPA** **Things don't stop from their own side.** The only reason a headache could stop is that you took care of someone else's pain. Aspirin may be *how* your headache stops, but it doesn't explain *why* it stops. The reason *why* it stops is that you created the good karma of taking care of someone before; the karma stays with you as an impression made in your mind in the past, and then eventually ripens into feeling good yourself.

རྟག་པ།

3. **TAKPA** **Things are unchanging.** When you reach a Buddha's paradise every tiny detail in your world will bring you total bliss. If things existed from their own side, they could never change. *Takpa* is an implication of thinking that things exist from their own side. If things were self-existent, nirvana would be impossible.

ཆད་པ།

4. **CHEPA** **Nothing exists, nothing matters.** It means to think that because nothing terminated has any nature from its own side, then nothing matters.

འགྲོ་བ།

5. **DROWA** **Believing that things go.** It means going from being the cause or seed into being the result, so it really means "growing." Going in the sense of a seed going into a sprout.

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Class Three, continued

འོང་བ།

6. **ONGWA** **Believing that things come.** It means coming to an end or stopping.
coming The sprout comes into existence when the seed is destroyed. So saying
“there is no coming or going” means that there is no cause and effect in
the way that you thought. The way to fix people hassling you at work is to take the blame
yourself for their problems -- not to try to justify yourself or judge others. Everything that
happens to you at work is an illusion: it is happening to you because of the impressions that
you put in your mind long ago, not because of the things that came just before that seem to
be the immediate causes.

གཅིག་།

མང་དང་།

7. **CHIK ...** 8. **TADE**
one many

One or many. No object is one thing or many things from
its own side. Nothing comes from its own side,
independent of your projections created by your past
karma.

The Two Extremes

Changya Rinpoche says to be free from the chains of attachment, giving up two extremes:

1. **Believing that things are the way they look.** The things that happen to us appear to
come from their own side. In the same way that you are forced to see the colors and shapes
in front of you as a pen, you are forced by your past karma to see the colors and shapes of
people moving around in your office as people stabbing you in the back or as supporting
you. Your office could be a hell or a paradise. It’s all coming from your own mind, and if
you practice *lojong* well you can “break the chains of your life.”

2. **Believing that nothing exists.** If everything in your office is just colors and shapes, then
it doesn’t exist or doesn’t matter how you treat people. Buddhism is called the Middle Way
because it describes the truth as being between these two extreme wrong views.

The Dam Ngak Lojong

གདམས་པ་འདུག་།

རྒྱལ་བ་ཡང་དགོན་པ།

DAM NGAK Personal advices, written by **GYALWA YANG GUNPA** (1213-1258).
personal advices These are personal instructions passed on to his students in an intimate
setting.

ས་སྐལ་ཡུ་པ་རྗེ་ཏ།

Sakya Pandita (c. 1200), one of Tibet’s greatest Lamas, was a teacher of Gyalwa Yangunpa.
The Sakya Pandita’s nephew, Pakpa, brought Buddhism to Mongolia, taught Kubla Khan,
and met Marco Polo there.

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སྒོ་ཚང་པ།

Gu-Tsangpa was another great lojong teacher who taught Gyalwa Yangunpa.

འབྲུག་པ་བཀའ་བརྒྱུད།

DRUKPA KAGYU

The specific Kagyu tradition of which Gyalwa Yangunpa was a founder.

**Nothing that starts remains unchanged,
Have no attachment, cut the ties;
There's no happiness in this vicious circle.
Get tired of it, find renunciation.**

**The world is hollow and meaningless,
Do not trust the lie;
Your own mind is the Buddha,
Go and meet your friend.**

“Your own mind is the Buddha” refers to your Buddha nature which is the emptiness of your mind. It is not something inside that needs to be cleaned off. You experience your mind as a bizarre mixture of happiness and sadness. If you had collected the necessary karma, you could be perceiving your mind as that of a beautiful enlightened being. The emptiness of your mind is the potential for you to become a Buddha. If you understood this, you would keep your vows perfectly and then be forced to see yourself as a Buddha.

**Nothing but the Dharma means anything at all,
Throw the rest out like trash;
It all boils down to dying,
Pack light and take off now.**

You have to apply the test of death to every action you undertake. Is this what I would want to die doing? A person practicing *lojong* must ask whether what they are doing every hour is worth doing. If not then don't do it. This is a barometer of whether you are spending your life well. The whole world is living differently. Spending your life purely in Dharma activity every minute is the smartest thing to do because everyone has to die. Do you want to die doing what you're doing right now?

The Six Keys of Gyalwa Yangunpa

1. **Put your death in your heart; this is the key for checking whether your practice is tuned too tight or too loose.** Would you be doing this activity if you were going to die today?

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2. **Think of the viper's nest of the problems of this life; this is the key for stopping attachment at the bottom of your heart.** Every good thing about your life will be stripped away from you – your friends, family, money, possessions, home, job, body, clothes, face, and name. Don't work for these things or be attached to them.
3. **Let every thought be of what other people need; this is the key for making everything you do the Dharma.** It doesn't matter what you're doing – you can work in Manhattan and have a normal family – but in the back of your mind you should always be thinking that everything you do is for others' benefit, then every activity will become Dharma.
4. **Don't think of anything but your Lama; this is the key for turning your mind and theirs into one.** Spend your whole day thinking about your Lama, serving and communing with them, and then sooner or later their mind and your mind will become as one, pure.
5. **See the world and the people in it as angels; this is the key for stopping the idea that life is an ordinary thing.** If you practice steadily and keep your vows better and better, every object in your life will start to transform gradually and ultimately the entire world and all the people in it will change into a paradise. It's healthy to stop believing that everything is normal. It's not the way it seems. The more you study and keep your vows, it will be revealed to you that this world is not what you thought. There's something weird going on here. Many special things are going on.
6. **Whatever comes make it crystal; this is the key for making this life turn to freedom all by itself.** Don't misunderstand this verse: nirvana is not automatic. Crystal means that everything is empty. It can only become nirvana for you if you make great effort and keep your vows and practice *lojong* sweetly.

Five Mental Poisons

These mental afflictions are really poison. They ruin your physical health and your intelligence and compassion. They literally destroy your body and mind. The description of each mental affliction is followed by the description of the result that will come eventually if you work hard on stopping these afflictions:

འདོད་ཆགས།

1. **DUCHAK** **Liking things ignorantly.** It means you would hurt someone to get the thing you want.
ignorant liking

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བདེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད།

DEWA TAMCHE
happiness all of the

You get all the happiness you want, because you refused to like things ignorantly and therefore cause yourself to lose them.

ཞེ་སྤང།

2. SHE DANG **Disliking things stupidly.** Buddhas dislike things, such as their pre-enlightenment suffering and our suffering. The test of whether your disliking is ignorant, is whether you would do something to hurt someone in order to get rid of it.

སྤུག་བསངལ་དང་བྲལ་བ།

DUKGNEL DANG DRELWA
suffering from freedom

No more pain at all.

གཏི་སྤུག།

3. TIMUK **Ignorance.** Not understanding how your world really works; not seeing that all of your problems were created by being bad to people in the past.

གྲུང་རྒྱལ་ཐོབ་པ།

JANGCHUB TOPPA
enlightenment achieve

Achieve enlightenment. You can reach enlightenment if you stop reacting to the world as if it's coming from it's own side, as if your problems are other people's fault, as if all of your sufferings don't come from you. The Buddha said do you think someone made the hell realms from fire and steel? Of course it's your own perceptions that create suffering.

ང་རྒྱལ།

4. NGA GYEL
me king

Pride. Wrong pride where you see others as lower than you. Good pride is okay: being happy and feeling proud about how you practiced *lojong* today is a goodness.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Three, continued

རང་མགོ་ཐོན་པ།

RANGO TUNBA

Totally independent. You have everything you need: money, knowledge, compassion, intelligence, Dharma.

You are self-sufficient in your own wisdom, meditation, morality. Now you can stand on your own independently as a pillar of strength. This is the result of eliminating pride.

ཕྱག་དོག

5. TRAKDOK
jealousy

Jealousy. It means the state of mind that cannot stand to see others get what they want. If you think this way you will always encounter obstacles to getting the things that you want yourself.

གྲོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་སེལ་བ།

GEK TAMCHE SELWA
obstacles remove them

Remove obstacles. If you eliminate jealousy and help others get what they want, you will get what you want too.

Ultimate Reality and Your Practice

**The reality of things is beyond the mind,
So reside in a state where you hold to nothing.**

New students should not be taught this kind of thing. Students who have studied Buddhist logic and emptiness teachings deeply for many years are qualified to get this *lojong*. It means that until the day that you see emptiness directly, you haven't seen ultimate reality directly. It doesn't mean that you're not experiencing reality in your everyday world or that things in this world don't function to cause pain. It means, don't think that things are coming from their own side. Don't hold to your own body and mind as being a crummy old unenlightened being because it's that way from it's own side – it's not. Your body and mind are blank. They are empty, and you can make them anything you want if you keep your vows, meditate regularly, and learn proper Buddhism. You can reach a Buddha paradise if you do these things and don't grasp to things as existing from their own side. It *doesn't* mean go space out in a corner somewhere.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Four: Seven Step Practice for Developing a Good Heart

ལོ་འཇོང་དུང་དུང་མ།

LO-JONG DUN DUN MA **The Seven Points on Developing a Good Heart.**
developing points seven
good heart

Lineage of the Seven Step Practice

ཐུབ་དབང་།

TUB - WANG
king able king

The Buddha, the king of the able Buddhas.

བྱམས་པ།

JAMPA
Maitreya

Maitreya, the future Buddha.

ཐོགས་མེད་སྐུ་མཆེད།

TOKME KUCHE

The Asanga brothers. This refers to Masters Asanga and Vasubhandu, two brothers who lived around 350 AD and together wrote about half of the original texts studied in the monasteries.

གསེར་གླིང་པ།

SER-LINGPA
gold island

The Lama of the golden island. Lord Atisha traveled to the golden island (Sumatra) to learn the lineage for the teachings on Bodhichitta.

ཇོ་བོ་ཇེ།

JOWO JE
Lord Atisha

Lord Atisha (982-1054)

འབར་མ་སྟོན་པ།

DROMTONPA

Dromtonpa (1005? - 1064) was Lord Atisha's most famous disciple, and the great facilitator of Lord Atisha's mission to Tibet.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Four, continued

པོ་ཏོ་བ།

POTOWA

Potowa. (1027-1105) With Dromtonpa, he began to teach the Lam Rim publicly, but *lojong* was still taught only in secret to a small group of carefully selected disciples.

ཤ་ར་བ།

SHARAWA

Sharawa learned the Seven Step Lojong from Potowa and then taught it to Chekawa.

བཀའ་གདམས་པ་དགོ་བཤེས་མཚད་ཁ་བ། ཡི་ཤེས་རྫོ་རྩེ།

KADAMPA

GESHE

CHEKAWA,

YESHE

DORJE

early Tibetan
Buddhists

spiritual
friend

his region

wisdom

diamond

Chekawa (1101-1175) was a great scholar from a young age who learned the Seven Step Lojong from Sharawa.

The Seven Step Lojong Becomes Public

Until this time, the material was taught in secret. The idea of spending your whole life – every minute of your day and every thought and resource that you have -- concentrating on what will help other people rather than concentrating on what will help you was too radical. The Lamas feared that students who were taught this idea of exchanging self and others would not respect and not seriously follow the *lojong* teachings. *Lojong* teaches that everything that you do during the day from the moment you wake up until the time you fall asleep should be motivated by giving other people what they need, and especially the Dharma. The whole reason for staying on this planet is to give to other people without thinking about what they can give back to you or what you can get out of it. This idea was considered to be too profound to be taught publicly.

Geshe Chakawa felt that there might be several people who were ready for the teaching but would miss it, so he decided to teach this *lojong* publicly for the first time. Then it broke out into the public, spread to the other Tibetan traditions, and came down to us through Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra to Pabonka Rinpoche and finally to Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche who is Khen Rinpoche's main Lama and the Dalai Lama's Lama. Although these teachings are now taught publicly, it is important to pass them along with correct explanations, especially for the mystical-sounding sections that relate to emptiness.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Four, continued

The Names of the Seven Steps

སྤོན་འགྲོ་ཏེན་གྱི་ཚེས་བསྟན་པ།

- 1. NGUN-DRO TEN GYI CHU TENPA
before come foundation Dharma teach them

Instructions on the foundation Dharma preliminaries. These are preliminaries (attitudes or contemplations) to do before you get to the main practice.

དངོས་གཤི་བྱང་ཚུབ་གྱི་སེམས་སྤྱོད་པ།

- 2. NGUSHI JANGCHUB KYI SEM JONGWA
main event bodhichitta developing

The main practice of developing the Wish for Enlightenment.

This is the practice of exchanging yourself and others. Normal bodhichitta is wanting to reach enlightenment so you can help others, but ultimate bodhichitta is the direct perception of emptiness. Anyone who wants to be a bodhisattva should have both, and both are covered in this *lojong*.

ཀྱིན་ངན་བྱང་ཚུབ་གྱི་ལམ་དུ་ཁེར་བ།

- 3. KYEN NGEN JANGCHUB KYI LAM DU KYERWA
circumstances bad Buddhahood transform into the path

Transforming problems into the path of enlightenment. Turn the obstacles in your life into the path.

ཚེ་གཅིག་གི་ཉམས་ལེན་དྲིལ་ནས་བསྟན་པ།

- 4. TSE CHIK GI NYAMLEN DRIL NE TENPA
lifetime one actual practice in a nutshell instructions

A whole lifetime's practice wrapped up into a nutshell.

སྤོ་འགྲོངས་པའི་ཚད།

- 5. LOJONGPAY TSE
finished developing when

How you know when you've reached your goal of developing the good heart.

སྤོ་སྤྱོད་གི་དམ་ཚིག།

- 6. LOJONG GI DAMTSIK
develop good heart pledges

Promises to yourself that you will never give up developing the good heart.

སྤོ་སྤྱོད་གི་བསྟན་བྱ།

- 7. LOJONG GI LABJA
develop good heart advices

Advices, little tricks, for developing the good heart.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Four, continued

I. Three Steps To Training in the Preliminaries

Train yourself first in the preliminaries. These are not the preliminaries to meditation.

1. **Meditate on the fact that you have a very short window of opportunity** to do something now and it will close quickly. These classes will not last forever, and you're relatively healthy and have time to study and practice.
2. **Meditate on your death**, which along with rebirth is very hard to grasp unless you've studied emptiness and know that this world is only your perception. Realize that your own mind is creating this world, and dying is just a change in your mental state.
3. **Meditate on the problems of samsara**, the vicious circle of suffering. Nothing will go right here, especially until you keep the three sets of vows. You are in a defective realm where things don't work right. You have to escape as soon as possible by keeping your vows. We're like crazy people in an insane asylum who need to figure out that we're crazy.

II. The Actual Practice

You begin by getting ready for the main practice with the meditation warm-ups:

- Take refuge.
- Make supplication. This is where you visualize your Lama and ask for help. You do the seven-step preliminaries to meditation which are covered in the prayer *Ganden Hlagyama*.
- You begin with breathing meditation to focus your mind clearly.

Then you begin the actual meditation practice. The text sounds very mystical and it's critical that the meaning be taught clearly. It is not some vague mystical thing. It boils down to Buddhist logic.

Learn to see all things as a dream. Realize that **the outer world, especially your own body, is empty of having any nature of its own.** It's an illusion, which does *not* mean that things don't really exist and you can do whatever you want, etc. It means that the way the world seems to work to you is not correct – it's an illusion, a dream. If you want to get rich, don't go slave away at some corporation; give away your money as vastly and as beautifully and as effectively as you can. If you want to be healthy take care of the sick; don't go to the gym or buy vitamins. If you want to be beautiful or handsome, meditate well and think about compassion for other beings, which actually changes your inner energies. If you want to get what you want, take care of other people. If you want to get some handsome guy or beautiful girl, keep your sexual morality perfectly. This is how the world really works and all the other explanations are an illusion. Everything is empty and what's really making things happen is your own karma.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Four, continued

If you want to get rid of roaches, help someone else find a place to live. A negative action cannot have a positive result. Killing the roaches can't make them go away. Your selfishness and failure to develop a good heart is what has created all the problems around you like traffic, pollution, problems at work, etc.

Examine the nature of the mind, unborn. This means that, like your body and the outer world, **your own mind is also empty.** Mental problems -- depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, unhappiness, nervousness, worry about the future, feeling that nobody loves you -- all come from not taking care of other people. Anything unpleasant or ugly in your mind is also a projection onto an otherwise empty screen. Your mind also lacks any nature of its own so it is "unborn," or empty.

The antidote itself is gone to is. The "antidote" is the mind of wisdom which understands the emptiness of the outside world and the emptiness of your own body and mind. You and your world are nothing other than projections forced on you by your past karma.

"Gone to is" means that sooner or later you will have to realize that **wisdom itself is also empty.** This wisdom itself is also a projection being forced on you by your own good deeds. Not even the antidote is self-existent. The object on which your mind is focused is empty; the mind itself is empty; and the understanding in that mind is also empty, meaning that understanding emptiness is itself a projection. The text is hinting at the second path, which is gaining an intellectual understanding of emptiness.

Let it go in the essence, source of all things. "Let it go" means two things:

1. Try to let go of, or overcome, the problems to meditation which are distractions (thinking about other things like what you're going to have for breakfast or do today) and dullness (due to sleepiness or eating too much, or more subtly, having your mind buzz out). So "let it go" here means working hard to avoid these two obstacles.
2. The second meaning of "let it go" is that you will reach a point where you can let go of the perception of things as being self-existent and move into the direct perception that things are not self-existent. So this line moves you from the second path to the third path of seeing emptiness directly.

In between sessions, be a figment of the imagination. This refers to a specific spiritual level:

རེའུ་ཐོབ་ཡི་ཤིས།

JETOB YESHE
afterward wisdom

Subsequent wisdom. This is the second half of the path of seeing, where you have a set of spiritual realizations called the four arya truths. Up until this time, you have never had a single correct or accurate perception. Your belief that things come from their own side, and not from your projections, infects every perception you have. The direct perception of emptiness is the first correct perception you ever have. When you come down from this experience you go back to seeing things as self-existent but you know you're wrong. You then enter the path of

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Four, continued

habituation, where you use the certain knowledge that things are empty to permanently overcome the perception of things as self-existent. As you are on this fourth path, the whole world appears as a “figment of the imagination.” This is the ultimate meaning of “illusion” in Buddhism: an arya’s knowledge that the world isn’t what it looks like – it’s not self-existent.

Practice giving and taking, alternatively; Let the two ride on the wind. This is one of the first written appearances of *Tong Len*, which is a practice where you meditate on taking the suffering of other people away from them on your in-breath, and using your out-breath to give them all the good things that they need.

Practice throughout the day in words. This means if you have had the teachings on how to do *tong-len* verbally; the First Dalai Lama gives a very holy instruction where you repeat the meditation in a prayer all day long while you walk around New York. All day long as you look into each person’s face, you fantasize about taking away their problems with your breath, sucking it into your nostrils and down into your chest and then destroying it immediately. Take all the worry and pressure and stress away from the people you see all day long. Then you breath out happiness and everything they ever wished for.

The order of taking’s to start with yourself. This means that in your morning sitting meditation you envision the pain you will face later in the day and take it away from that suffering person. So you begin doing *tong-len* by practicing on yourself.

The Three Objects

ཡུལ་ཡིད་དུ་འོང་མི་འོང་བར་མ་གསུམ།

YUL YI-DUONG MIONG BARMA SUM
objects pretty not nice in between three

Pretty things you like; things you don't like that are not nice; and things or people you don't care about either way. These are the three things that everyone is focusing on all day long.

The Three Poisons

ཆགས་སྣང་གཉི་མུག་གསུམ།

CHAK DANG TIMUK SUM
ignorant ignorant ignorance three
liking disliking

To like nice things in an ignorant way. This means you don't understand that this nice thing is being created by your own mind and you would do something wrong to keep it or hurt someone to get it -- disliking things *ignorantly*. It means you would hurt someone to get away from something you don't like. The Buddha dislikes things -- that other beings have to go to hell. Ignorance is the state of mind that fails to understand where things are coming from.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Four, continued

The Three Virtues

ཆགས་སྤང་གཉི་ལྷན་མེད་པའི་དགོ་ཚུ་གསུམ།

The three virtues are your practice of taking away the three poisons from other people all during the day. You are supposed to be sucking in the three poisons from other people as they focus on the three objects: the things they like, don't like, and don't care about. By doing this practice you collect incredible virtue that is the opposite of the things you are taking away from these people.

The blame all belongs to one person. You. If you don't like the things that are happening in your life, keep your vows better.

III. Transforming Problems into the Path of Enlightenment

See the deception as being the four bodies; Emptiness is the matchless protector. This is the step on how to use problems as the spiritual path. "Deception" means that it looks like if you lie it can get you money, and it looks like if you kill the roaches in your apartment it will be clean, and it looks like if you get the guy in trouble at work everything will be all right for you. According to Buddhism, a negative deed cannot lead to a positive result. The "four bodies" includes a Buddha's foxy body that stays in paradise (*sambhokakaya*), the emanation bodies a Buddha sends throughout the universe to anyone who needs it (*nirmanikaya*), and the omniscience of their a Buddha's mind; but the four bodies here refers mainly to the *dharmakaya* which is the emptiness of the other three bodies of a Buddha. It's the fact that the bodies you have now could have been the paradise, emanation and omniscience bodies. It's your emptiness, your Buddha nature (*sangye kyi rik*). Therefore, emptiness is your real protector. Paintings of the Buddha can't help you. If you understand that your world and your body and your mind are empty, and any bad thing that comes to you is a projection of your own mind, forced on you by your past karma, your natural reaction will be to learn and keep your freedom (*pratimosha*), bodhisattva, and tantric vows. Then the emptiness of the world will be your savior because what you see is blank and is only projected by your mind. When your boss screams at you, first think "emptiness."

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Five: Seven Points, Five Powers, Powa

Introduction to Powa

This class continues with the Seven-Points for Developing a good Heart, and covers steps four through seven. It includes a presentation of the practice of *powa*.

POWA To relocate or to move to a new location. It means to move, deliver, or send your consciousness into death. It's the proper way at the moment that you're going to die, or shortly before, to move your mind to a better place. Most of the *powa* teachings are secret, but tonight's presentation is an open teaching and is very important.

IV. A Whole Lifetime's Practice: The Five Powers

སྒྲོབས་ལང།

TOP - NGA power five **The Five Powers.** The five powers refers both to 1) five practices that you do throughout every day and hour of your life, and 2) five different practices that have the same five names but constitute *powa* practice and are practiced as you approach the moment of death.

འཕན་བ་གྱི་སྒྲོབས།

1. **PENPA GYI TOB** Projecting power. It means **making a resolution for the future.** to project of power The Tibetan verb *pen* means to project something, like how an archer shoots an arrow, or how your karma throws your mind into the next life. So projecting power (*penpa gyi tob*) means that when you first wake up in the morning, you decide that for the rest of this day (or month or year or life) you are going to use this day well. You must determine to overcome the mistake of looking out for number one – trying to take care of what you want before trying to take care of what other people need. All of the problems in your life – getting older, losing energy, losing friends, seeing others close to you die – are evidence of the failure of your spiritual practice. The way you're approaching life doesn't work. According to Buddhism, you can reverse these problems if you stop worrying about yourself and start worrying about other people. Even the most generous people you find generally are just concentrating on what they like, such as helping others or getting attention; but you must truly give up your whole life and resources to help others. As the years go by, this kind of person will get healthier, younger and more intelligent, and enter another realm that is sacred. You would only notice this change in them if you were doing this practice yourself. The key is giving up the approach to life of watching out for the things you need before the things that other people need. It's very difficult but as long as you continue the opposite behavior you will suffer, and if you're suffering it's a sign that you have it wrong. The real enemy is your tendency to cherish yourself first. Wake up thinking about what you can do to destroy this enemy in your mind. This will get you to an enlightened realm. If you can overcome self-cherishing you've got it made. Self-cherishing has only caused you misery in your life.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Five, continued

གོམས་པ་གྱི་སྣོབ་ས།

2. **GOMPA GYI TOB** **Getting used to cherishing others first.** It means to carry
habituation of power the thought you woke up with throughout the rest of the
day. Every time you change positions – sit down, stand
up, lie down, start walking – decide that between now and the next change of position you
will use that time to fight your main enemy. This is a Kadampa trick to help you get used
to thinking about what other people want and worrying less about what you want.

དཀར་པོ་གྱི་སྣོབ་ས།

3. **KARPO SABUN GYI TOB** **The force of pure white seeds.** Every irritation in
white (virtue) seed of power your life is the cause of your aging and falling apart,
but you can reverse this process. You must first of
all **collect powerful good karma** (white seeds). To do so you must find out what the most
powerful good deeds are because you don't have time to fool around with small good deeds.
Frankly, the most powerful good karma is to serve a Lama, especially to assist them in
teaching the Dharma to others, and to serve the Dharma, to get it to other people's minds.
The second part is to figure out the ways to **wipe out, or purify, your old bad karmic seeds.**
You do this by keeping your book of vows.

སུན་འབྲིན་པ་གྱི་སྣོབ་ས།

4. **SUNJINPA GYI TOB** **To rip out from the heart.** Throughout the day, whenever
to rip out of power a thought comes to you to get only what you want, destroy
that thought immediately; and do this all throughout the
day.

སྣོན་ལམ་གྱི་སྣོབ་ས།

5. **MUNLAM GYI TOB** At night, just before you go to sleep, close your eyes and
prayer of power joyfully review your day's efforts at helping others get the
things they wanted, then **make a prayer** that you get
bodhichitta, the wish to reach enlightenment. The normal bodhichitta is the wish to get
other people to enlightenment. The ultimate kind of bodhichitta is the direct perception of
emptiness, and also pray to reach this goal. After this experience you will be fearless; you
confirm all of the truths of Buddhism, see your future lives, and know that you will soon
reach enlightenment.

You should do these five powers every day and not let anyone know that you're doing them.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Five, continued

འཕོ་བ།

Powa.

The Real Practice of Powa

You must do the above five powers every day for a long time before you will be able to successfully do this *powa* practice at the moment of your death. As you are dying your mind falls apart dramatically, and you will not be able to do some new *powa* to save yourself from projecting into a bad realm.

Powa means to send your mind into death with these five instructions. The names of these five are the same as before, but the meaning is different -- they refer to the practice of *powa* at the moment of death.

- 1. PENPA GYI TOB**
to project of power On your death bed you **make the determination that you will not lose the wish to help other people**, to serve others somehow.
- 2. GOMPA GYI TOB**
get used to it of power As you begin to be aware that you're going to die, you **get yourself so used to the idea of thinking about helping others** that when you reach the moment of death, you will be able to think this way despite the pain and hallucinations that normally accompany the death process. You prepare yourself to die with the vision that you could be responsible for teaching people not to die and to get to a Buddha realm.
- 3. KARPO SABUN GYI TOB**
virtue seeds of power **Mentally give away everything you have.** It's extremely bad karma when you die to have any attachment to your possessions or your body or what you used to be. Hope that all sentient beings will happily use your bank account, house, body, things, etc. Happily give up these things. Also, offer whatever virtue and good deeds you did to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the universe and die clean. Thoughts of attachment to your family, money, etc. at death will negatively affect what you see at death.
- 4. SUNJINPA GYI TOB**
rip it out of power **Destroy the negative imprints in your mind that have come from your bad deeds.** Confess and clean out any bad deeds you are aware of, especially any vows you broke knowingly. It's very important to die with a clear conscience. Then the most important thing is to believe that they're removed. You disown any bad deeds you've done. If you are a tantric practitioner, at the moment of death you should do a *dang-juk* into the *sinduri kiln kor*, and ideally you should do a new empowerment in the final hours of your death.
- 5. MUNLAM GYI TOB**
Prayer of power As you die, it will hurt a lot. There's a special physical pain. **You pray that all the bad deeds and mental and physical suffering should come into me and die with me.** You dedicate your death to destroying others' bad karma and pain, and when the pain of death comes to you, remember that. Then when you die, like Lord Buddha, try to lay on your right side, peacefully, with your hand under your head, peacefully.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Five, continued

Geshe Chekawa's Last Words

ངས་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་དོན་དུ་མནར་མེད་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་སྣོན་པར་བྱས་ཀྱང་།

མི་འགྲོ་བར་འདུག། །དག་ཞིང་གི་སྣང་བ་ཤར་བྱུང་།

NGA SEMCHEN TAMCHE KYI DONDU NARME DU DROWAR MUNPAR
JE KYANG, MINDROWAR DUK, DAKSHING GI NANGWA SHAR JUNG

I was praying that I could pass on to the lowest hell for the sake of every living being. It's not working. I can't go. All I can see before me now is the paradise of enlightenment.

V. The Point Where You've Developed the Good Heart

The point at which you can say you've finished developing the good heart is when all the Dharma that was ever spoken all boils down to one thing: **fighting your tendency to take care of yourself and to ignore other people.**

There are two judges; keep the main one. Only two people can witness the success of your Dharma practice. The first is the people around you; generally speaking, you should be getting along better and better with your family, etc. if you are practicing well. "Keep the main judge" means that you are really the only one who can judge your practice. Don't worry about what other people think and don't try to impress other people. Ultimately only you can be the judge. If the inner judge is sensitive and satisfied with your progress then you are doing okay. No one knows what you are doing personally, privately in your own heart. You know if your mind and life and heart has sweetened and you feel more love inside yourself. At this point, the commentary says, the main judge of whether something is the Dharma or not is whether or not it is helping to fix your mental afflictions like jealousy, anger, or competitiveness.

Be joy alone in an unbroken stream. This means that if things are going well, don't get too happy; if things are going bad, don't get too sad. Karma doesn't ripen immediately (except for tantra), so bad or good things that are happening right now are all being driven by things you did in the past, and things will probably reverse one way or the other tomorrow. What's happening now is not connected to your spiritual practice today. Over time things will get better and better, but your deep karmic pockets will cause negative things in the future so don't get too excited about it. Just keep planting good seeds for the future and keep your joy all the time. It's especially hard with the people close around you.

It's there when you can keep it unthinking. An inexperienced horse rider who gets distracted will fall off the horse, but an expert won't lose their balance when distracted. With *lojong* practice it boils down to reaction time: when you encounter some irritating thing the time between when you first get annoyed and when you stop the negative reaction should be getting shorter and shorter until you stop anger immediately. This only happens with consistent practice. The ability to adjust immediately is key. Don't get attached to your plans because new conditions might call for a different approach.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Five, continued

VII. Certain Advices for Developing the Good Heart

Act now, do the most important thing. Crush your tendency to watch out for yourself.

Figure out both and free yourself. The first thing to figure out is what has gotten you upset in the past; you should concentrate on the biggest one first. Study the object that triggers your strongest mental afflictions; then figure out the conditions under which this happens -- like when you're tired, or too busy, and your ability to deal with a mental affliction is lowered. Then analyze the reason why that mental affliction is unacceptable: for example, you as an aspiring bodhisattva get jealous when someone else gets something that makes them happy. Mental afflictions are always indefensible and dysfunctional. The second thing to figure out is how to stop these mental afflictions in the future. Pick out the smallest form of that mental affliction and design how you will avoid it in the future.

Stop thinking all the time about how wonderful you are. The point is not to have low self-esteem. Anyone seriously studying *lojong* is an incredibly amazing person -- one in a million. The point is that when you finally go out and do something to help living beings, don't get too enamored with yourself for two reasons: 1) they really need you, their mental afflictions are literally killing them; and 2) you took bodhisattva vows and swore to help all beings, so what's the big deal that you finally decided to help people.

Don't expect any thanks. This refers to four things:

1. If you do spiritual practice, no one will thank you or appreciate your efforts.
2. Don't expect any help from others.
3. Don't expect anyone to say anything nice to you, not even your Lama.
4. Don't wish for any fame or good reputation. Just help others quietly, privately.

VI. Pledges to Keep for Developing the Good Heart

Keep to the three laws:

1. **Not acting in a way that contradicts what you have committed yourself to** means don't get excited about being a crazy yogi *lojong* practitioner and ignore your other vows.
2. **Never placing yourself in a dangerous situation** means that when you stop cherishing yourself, don't ignore normally taking care of your body to keep it working well so you can help others. Anything which endangers your health or your holy body is not *lojong*. To see emptiness directly you must be fairly comfortable, well fed, and healthy.
3. **Never falling into the habit of discriminating between others** means don't be selective, practicing patience and such only with those you like.

Change your mind and stay the same means that inside of your mind you must undergo major change in terms of the three principle paths (renunciation, bodhichitta, and correct view). On the outside, you should just look and act like some normal old guy, and no one should have any idea that you're undergoing a major transformation, except perhaps that you seem to be a little more helpful or patient.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Six: Freedom from the Four Attachments

18 Pledges to Keep for Developing the Good Heart

1. **Keep to the three laws.** *Lojong* crazy yogi behavior means giving up everything for other people – whatever other people need, take care of that first; whatever you need, take care of that last. Act totally opposite to how the world acts. You can take care of others first, but can never use this as an excuse to break your other vows: pratimoksha, bodhisattva, tantra.
2. **Never endanger yourself.** Don't put yourself into dangerous situations while helping others.
3. **Don't discriminate between people.** You must support and be kind to all people equally, not just your friends.
4. **Change your mind and stay the same.** In this life all you have to look forward to is dying and losing all the things you love, and we're all in the same boat. In your mind you must transform how you think about life, but on the outside, just look and act like a normal person. Don't advertise what you're doing. Other people will benefit from your efforts, but will only notice that you're doing some simple nice things.
5. **Speak not of what was broken.** Don't judge other people's practice and motives. Don't talk about other people's apparent faults.
6. **Never worry about what they're doing.** Don't talk about or even think about other people's practice. Be pure yourself and only worry about your own life. Don't gossip at all.
7. **Rid yourself of the biggest affliction first.** Go after your strongest mental affliction first. Don't focus on your secondary afflictions. You must be honest with yourself about your worst afflictions.
8. **Never hope for any reward.** You will get rewards if you practice well and keep your vows and meditate regularly, but don't expect instant results. It takes time for karma to ripen.
9. **Stop eating poison food.** When you finally do a good deed, don't poison it with an attitude of self-cherishing, like thinking about how this behavior will help you.
10. **Don't let the stream flow smooth.** Don't be a pushover. Put up a good resistance against your mental afflictions. As long as you put up a good fight, you don't break the vow. Every minute of resisting a mental affliction is extremely good karma.
11. **Forget repaying criticism.** Don't return criticism. Listen to the person and see if you can get anything good out of it. If someone causes you physical or mental harm, don't

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Six, continued

return the offense. In this way you stop the cycle of violence. You must learn to separate the good or bad things that are happening to you now from your current behavior; the causes for these are mainly what you created long ago. It's ignorance to think that what's happening to you today is coming from what you're doing today. So don't be proud about the good things in your life.

12. **Give up laying ambushes.** When someone hurts you, don't plan a trap to hurt them back.
13. **No going for the jugular.** In a group of people, when someone else makes an error, don't expose them publicly by focusing on their faults.
14. **Load your own truck, no passing the buck.** Don't try to place the blame for your mistakes on other people. Admit your errors freely. *Lojong* behavior includes taking the blame for others' mistakes. Just before you get real bodhichitta, you get an attitude of taking personal responsibility for all the trouble anyone is facing.
15. **Don't get fixed on speed.** When there's some opportunity for gain, you take the best part for yourself. "Speed" means that you try to get the best before something good runs out.
16. **Don't feed the wrong face.** Starve your tendency to take care of yourself first and rather take care of others. Don't turn *lojong* into a means for feeding your mental afflictions, like pride or jealousy.
17. **Don't turn the sweet angel to a devil.** *Lojong* is the sweet angel: taking care of others first. Don't do *lojong* motivated by acting out jealousy or desire or anger or pride.
18. **Don't look for crap to make yourself happy.** Don't derive pleasure from bad things that happen to people you don't like. Don't think that their bad fortune confirms your negative view of them. This refers to ill-will which is the ninth of the ten top misdeeds.

The Five Great Sakya Patriarchs

ས་སྐྱ་གོང་མ་རྣམ་ལྔ

SAK - YA GONGMA NAM NGA
Sakya lineage patriarch great five

The five great Sakya patriarchs. The freedom from the four attachments comes from the great Sakya patriarchs who are presented on the following page.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Six, continued

ཞེན་པ་བཞི་བྲལ།

SHENPA **SHI** **DREL**
attachments four freedom

Freedom from the Four Attachments.

KUN KONCHOK GYALPO (1034- ?)

He started a Dharma center in Tibet on a hillside with chalky-white rock. He has a son...

JOSAY JAMPEL

He is Kun Konchok Gyalpo's son, who continued his father's Dharma center.

ས་ཆེན་ཀུན་དགའ་སྣང་པོ།

1. **SACHEN KUNGA NYINGPO** (1092-1158) He is Josay Jampel's son. **Bari Lotsawa** (lotsawa means translator) was translating all the Sanskrit Buddhist books into Tibetan.

Kunga Nyingpo at twelve years old was hanging out with Bari Lotsawa who was teaching him secret methods for contacting the enlightened beings and gaining wisdom. After initially encountering some obstacles, the twelve-year old Kunga Nyingpo had an extraordinary encounter with Manjushri, flanked by two bodhisattvas. Manjushri granted him the teaching called Freedom from the Four Attachments on the spot. He later has two sons...

SA - KYA The gray-white hillside where Kun Konchok Gyalpo first started
earth white the Dharma center served as the name for what became the
great Sakya lineage.

བསོད་ནམས་ཙེ།

2. **SONAM TSE** (1142-1182)

An elder son of Kunga Nyingpo.

ཇེ་བཙུན་གྲགས་པ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

3. **JETSUN DRAKPA GYELTSEN** (1147-1216)
famous

A younger son of Kunga Nyingpo. Drakpa Gyeltsen becomes one of the greatest figures in the Sakya lineage

and in the Vajrayogini lineage. He wrote a great commentary on the freedom from the four attachments which is the reading for tonight's class.

ས་སྐྱ་པཎྌི་ཏ་ཀུན་དགའ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

4. **SAKYA PANDITA, KUNGA GYELTSEN**
wise man

(1182-1251) He is Drakpa Gyeltsen's nephew and his lineage holder.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Six, continued

He is one of the greatest Lamas ever in Tibet, a great logician, great Sanskrit scholar and translator who memorized the 8,000 verses in Sanskrit. At the end of his life, he was traveling to the Tibetan border to appease Godan, a Mongolian prince. He sent his nephews ahead to meet the prince, and they converted him and many Mongolians to Buddhism. One of the nephews was called...

འགྲོ་དགོན་ཚེས་རྒྱལ་འཕགས་པ།

5. **DROGUN CHUGYAL PAKPA** (1238-1280) He is one of the young nephews realized being of the Sakya Pandita who converted the Mongolian prince Godan. He wound up in Beijing as the private Lama of Kubla Khan, and he met Marco Polo. He invented a Mongolian alphabet so the Mongolians could translate Buddhism into their spoken language. The Mongolian empire spread all the way to Europe's borders. Then as the empire shrank, some of the Mongolians got *stuck there* (called *kalmuk* in Mongolian). After World War II they made their way to Howell, NJ, and a Mongolian Lama named Geshe Wangyal taught some Americans named Jeffrey Hopkins and Robert Thurman. Then the Dalai Lama sent Geshe Lobsang Tharchin to Howell. This is our direct lineage, and is very important for the Vajrayogini lineage.

Freedom from Attachment to this Life

TSE DI LA SHEN NA CHUPA MIN You're no Dharma practitioner if **you're attached to this life.** These are lifetime this to attached if Dharma you're no practitioner Manjushri's first words to Pakpa. These words are spoken to Pakpa who is already a great Buddhist. We must determine what "attachment to this life" means. It's not what you think. It doesn't mean don't like or enjoy anything, or feel guilty. It doesn't mean you shouldn't have the desire to reach certain goals, like to nirvana or to help all sentient beings. The meaning is very profound and doesn't mean that you shouldn't care about things. His Holiness, The Dalai Lama constantly enjoys things and giggles all day long. You can have a family and enjoy things in this life, and a Buddha paradise completely full of bliss. The joys of this life are a tiny indication of what could happen when you reach enlightenment. The whole point of life is to reach total ecstasy and bliss. However, **Dharma students who want to become masters of Buddhism, during their student years, have to suffer; people who are attached to small pleasures can never attain great ecstasy.**

What you choose to do daily with your life is an indication of whether or not you are attached to this life. Making the right choice about what to dedicate your life to is freedom from attachment. On what basis do you decide what you want to do with your life? **If your decision about what to spend your life doing is based on any of the following four bases, you have what is called attachment to this life:**

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Six, continued

བག་ཆགས།

1. **BAKCHAK**
seed
Instincts. You keep your morality and keep to civilized behavior because you have a natural inner conscience that stops you from killing people that irritate you. Your good instincts come from seeds planted in your past lives. If you trust these instincts as the basis for your behavior, you have attachment to this life. Your good nature is impermanent, and it will slide when the pressure is on.

ཚོར་བ།

2. **TSORWA**
feelings
Feelings. You keep your ethics when it feels good; but when you need something badly or want to feel good, you will act immorally to get it.

ལུགས་སྲོལ།

3. **LUKSUL**
customs
The customs of your country. Gambling or the lottery, drinking alcohol, abortion, adultery, hunting, etc., are either illegal or encouraged at different times in the United States. You can't trust your civilization's value system.

ཕ་མ།

4. **PA MA**
father mother
Your parents' morality. Half of what you believe in is some silly thing your parents taught you which you've never seriously examined.

To truly live a moral life based on Buddhist ethics, you will often have to go against what your civilization believes. For example, it's crazy to work your whole life without sufficient time to devote to your spiritual goals. Our civilization creates people whose only meaningful goal is to die with a bunch of possessions they can't use. Freedom from attachment to this life means to think independently. You must examine the standard of your behavior against your understanding of karma and emptiness – not against your instincts, feelings, culture, or parents' values. An ideal lifestyle might be to do your daily practice until 1:00 pm, work until 6:00 pm, and take off two months a year for retreats. You must work these things out for yourself.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Seven: How Hell Exists; 12-Point Lojong

Freedom from Attachment to This Life (cont'd.)

A person who is still attached to this life is no Dharma practitioner. This class continues the topic of freedom from the four attachments. Your ethics, and the things you choose to do with your life, must be driven by wisdom and an understanding of karma and emptiness – not by some Judeo-Christian belief system or other influences like your culture, friends, parents, etc. These influences will always change and are not reliable. Buddhist morality may overlap a lot with these influences, but the other 20% is very important. It will allow you to avoid getting old and dying. You must escape this realm and the negativity in your mind sometime during this life. Your morality must be driven by this goal alone. Don't do anything that doesn't protect you from dying. Go after the things that will get you out of this realm and out of death. *You can go to heaven or paradise, but you don't have much time to do it,* and you have to learn a system and keep it independent of your society's influence.

Learning, Contemplation, and Meditation

TU Learning

SAM Contemplation

GOM Meditation

The other half of how to be free from attachment to this life is found in the independent practices of learning, contemplation, and meditation. You have to think for yourself, and find and practice a path that will save you from death and suffering. Your spiritual practice has to be a personal journey based on your own independent decisions about what's right or wrong. You must test any teaching you hear and decide if it will work. You have to try it out and see if it will change your life. Be very critical, and don't accept anything you hear unless it tests out logically and through your experience. You must make the time to effectively contemplate and meditate on these things. Too many possessions will clog your mind's attention which you need to practice. The point is that the priorities of our culture are wrong. Working 96% of the weeks in the year is not a good deal. It may be easy to give up a few harmful things in your life, but can you give up your attachment to your whole western civilization's way of thinking? This is very difficult.

According to Buddhism, if you don't break this attachment you will die. You must prioritize your good deeds and do the strongest ones. Do the Dharma that is more powerful. For example, you should practice bodhisattva morality ahead of pratimoksha morality, and concentrating on tantric practices if you have taken an initiation. So attachment to this life can mean failing to put your efforts into your highest practices. *Once you get into a spiritual path, don't stay at the lower levels and avoid the practices that take more faith or courage. At each point in your practice, you have to face these decisions and move up to the higher practices of tantric practice, in the same way that you had to give up worldly morality when you first entered the Buddhist path. Go after the highest virtues first. Don't move up before you're ready, or you will fail; but when you're ready, go for it.*

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Seven, continued

Renunciation

A person who is still attached to the three worlds has no renunciation. The “three worlds” refers to the three kinds of pain: obvious pain, the pain of change, and pervasive pain.

ངན་སྐོང་གསུམ།

NGEN - SONG SUM **The three realms.** Lama Drakpa Gyeltsen says that the first kind of pain -- obvious pain, or the pain of pain – is equal to the three lower realms. Hungry ghosts are beings who were stingy, cheap, unhelpful to others in their past life, and were attached to money and possessions. Therefore, after they die their spirits are tormented and they can’t get enough of anything. You can see this pattern in humans, but Buddhism teaches that hungry ghosts are beings in an entirely different realm. You shouldn’t believe in the lower realms just because Buddhism teaches it. You must test its existence with logic and see if it’s likely.

The Existence of Hell and the Sutra Requested by Upali

ཉི་བར་འཁོར་གྱིས་ལུས་པའི་མདོ།

NYEWARKOR GYI SHUPAY DO **The Sutra Requested by Upali.** Lord Buddha teaches in this sutra that the people who die and travel to the lower realms “don’t even exist at all.” There are no instruments of pain there, because “everything that you see happening to you within these realms of terror is only a projection...the whole world is but a creation that comes from your projections.” Hell is a potential problem for us *because* it’s only a projection. There is no beautiful all-loving god in the sky who sends bad kids to a special box to be tortured if they ate meat on Friday. Hell is very real and is not a metaphor. It can exist because it’s a projection.

Just like a cylinder – which can be a pen to a human, and a chewable object to a dog – the world you live in depends on your point of view. How you see it only depends on your mind. Ultimately, independently, from its own side, self-existently, by nature, the cylinder is neither a pen nor a chewable object – it is empty or blank. But it is one or the other depending on who is looking at it. Every object in your world is the same: what it is only depends on how your mind is looking at it, and you don’t have a choice to see what you want. A dog can’t write you a letter with the pen.

The world around you is the raw material for heaven or hell, or a little bit of both, which is what we call the human realm. If you straightened out your karma, you would be seeing it as something wonderful. If you’re sloppy with your karma, the event of death will trigger new perceptions of this same raw material as hell. If hell is a projection of your mind, then it’s possible, and you’re in trouble. Even in this life, your mind can shift from great happiness to great suffering. Your world happening around you is nothing but a shift

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Seven, continued

in your perceptions. There is a certain level of spiritual development in your understanding of emptiness called *zorlam supa* where you cannot be born in a hell. A dog is not something furry. A dog is a collection of experiences or perceptions, a being who sees its skin as furry to itself. **So the second attachment to this life is attachment to your idea that the world cannot change.** The way to stay out of hell is to keep your vows.

The Three Lower Realms

དུན་འགྲོ།

1. DUNDRO **Animal.**

ཡི་དྲགས།

2. YIDAK **Hungry ghost.** A small tendency towards selfishness in the mind, magnified a million times through the process of death and the bardo, can create projections of a hungry ghost. They have physical bodies which are too subtle to see.

དམྱལ་བ།

3. NYELWA **Hell.** The perception of time slows down here. Time is also a projection, and a day in hell feels like many years. You feel only pain.

The three lower realms are from your mind. It's not true to say that things only exist in your brain. Things do exist outside of you. There are people around you, and they are real because they are your projection. This room could be a tantric paradise, a hell, or a lousy old basement.

The Suffering of Change

The second kind of pain is called the **suffering of change**. Even if you're born in a human realm, you live in a world where every good thing in your life changes. Relationships must end in loss, either through death or dislike or boredom. Your jobs, relationships, etc. are always sullied by dissatisfaction. In this realm, even if you get every thing you dream for, you cannot avoid your mind shifting and becoming dissatisfied several months later. Your mind is cursed by your shifting karma. It's not your fault that karma works this way. It's just the way life goes in the human desire realm. You have to use your understanding of emptiness and keep your vows and then you can manipulate your reality into a place where the nice things don't change. You must do good deeds with the perfection of wisdom -- an understanding of emptiness -- in order to create everlasting happiness.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Seven, continued

The **mystic power of this good deed** refers to the basic good deed of a *lojong* practitioner: not worrying about yourself and taking care of other people. Your main enemy is your self-cherishing. The “mystic power” is the desire that others’ pain come to you so they wouldn’t have to experience it. This is particularly important at the moment of your death. Doing this doesn’t get them enlightened because their bad karma is in their mind -- no one can take away someone else’s bad karma except the person who did the bad deeds. So the “mystical power of this great deed” is that it gets *you* enlightened faster if you really want to take away other people’s pain. Then you can teach others how to do it for their benefit.

The Twelve Point Lojong

ལྷོ་སྤྱང་ནམ་མཁའ་འཁྱིལ་མ།

LOJONG NAMKAY KYIMMA **Twelve Point Lojong.** Literally, it means sky, space celestial mansions “*lojong* of the twelve houses of the sky,” because in Tibetan astrology there are twelve celestial mansions. It describes twelve spiritual qualities or behaviors of people who are successfully practicing *lojong*.

1. **YICHE** **Trustworthy.** You can count on them to do what they say; they don’t let you down.
2. **KADRIN DREN** **Loyal.** You remember the kindness of your sweet teacher and fellow students who have helped greatly in your practice.
kindness remember
3. **MILA ROK** **Helpful.** You always help anyone who needs it.
to people help
4. **KUN LA JAM** **Friendly** to everyone. You treat everyone in a gentle, soft, friendly way.
everyone to gentle
5. **SHEN LA TREL CHEN** **Courteous.** You’re sensitive to others’ reactions to what you do. Give up your seat, help carry stuff, hold door open, etc.
others to courteous big
6. **SHEN GYI DREN** **Kind.** You are the servant of others; you’re at their command.
others of foot servant
7. **DULWAR NYEN** **Obedient.** You listen carefully to what you’re asked to do; then you do it obediently to help your Lama or other people.
tamed to listen
8. **DZUM KAR CHEN** **Cheerful.** You never act grumpy, working cheerfully for others. You don’t complain or whine about things.
smile white big

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Seven, continued

9. **TUN DZE BAK-YU** **Thrifty.** Don't waste the planet's resources. Turn off the lights. Don't buy unnecessary things, so you can share more with others.
in common share thrifty
10. **PA TAK DEN** **Brave.** You are courageous, especially your world view and lifestyle. Do the right thing regardless of the consequences.
warrior sign possess
11. **DAK SHING SO** **Clean.** To create your own pure land or paradise, have a simple, clean home; this is a cause for your Buddha paradise.
pure field create
12. **CHU SEM SHUL** **Reverent.** Your mind is carried away in the current of the Dharma. Your whole day is happy Dharma activity.
Dharma mind abandoned to

Dharma Revisionism

Is it a coincidence that these twelve points match the Boy Scout code? As your Dharma practice gets more powerful, you can re-write the history of your life. You will start to have *namdak* - a spiritual level where you realize that the early influences in your life were not normal people. Buddhas can appear as any normal-looking person who affected your life. Can you really say for sure that your Boy Scout leader was not an emanation of a Lama? Could they not have been both a normal person and a Buddha?

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Eight: The Wheel of Knives

མཚོན་ཆ་གོན་ལོ།

TSUNCHA KORLO
knives circle

The Wheel of Knives. This idea is described in a vinaya sutra that presents the topic of karma and its consequences.

ཉཱ་མ་རྣམ་པ།

DHARMA RAKSHITA

The Indian author who passed on the Wheel of Knives teaching. We don't know his dates, but he was a master of Abhidharma teachings.

ཇོ་བོ།

JOWO JE

Lord Atisha (982-1052). The great Lama in our lineage who first brought Buddhism from India to Tibet. His students were the Kadampas, who were the early Gelugpas in Tibet.

The wheel of knives is a phrase that represents the idea that if you do something to someone else, you get the same consequences back on yourself. It's the big pay back. Any bad thing that ever happens to you was put into motion by you. Then when you continue to get angry at someone (for a problem that you actually created through your misdeeds in the past), the vicious cycle continues, and this is the meaning of samsara. The people who bother you are only the instruments that carry the energies you set in motion in the past back to you. These energies could also be called:

- Razor-tipped boomerang.
- Actions that backfire on us.
- Blowing off your own toes.
- Hanging yourself.
- Digging your own grave.
- A blacksmith making a sword who slips and stabs himself to death with it.
- An archer who accidentally falls on his own arrow and dies.

There is no unpleasant mental or physical event in your life that you haven't set into motion yourself.

Peacocks Wander in a Forest of Poison Trees

A Sanskrit and Tibetan tradition said that peacocks only want to eat poisonous plants which is what gives them the beauty of their feathers – and they can't stand what other animals would consider to be desirable. In the same way, bodhisattva warriors seek out opportunities to help others even if it's unpleasant for themselves.

CLASS NOTES

Course XIV: Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

Class Eight, continued

Bodhisattvas Always Want to Reach Enlightenment As Soon As Possible

The best thing you can do for others is to reach total enlightenment very quickly so you will have the ability to help as many other beings as soon as possible. So the verse means that a bodhisattva should embrace any hardship that comes to them, and turn it into an opportunity for practice. They turn disasters into a wonderful thing to transform into their own enlightenment so they can help others. It doesn't mean that they want to suffer or would ever delay reaching enlightenment. Mental afflictions are always negative things that you should try to avoid -- but if you do have a mental affliction, you should use it as an opportunity to escape.

The Abhidharma Kosha says "All the worlds come from karma, and karma is any time the mind moves." So even a few seconds of anger is very strong bad karma. A bodhisattva would immediately crush anger and use that exercise to advance their practice. A bodhisattva would never let anger continue because anger would exclude them from paradise and therefore prevent them from being able to help people. Bodhisattvas are sworn to get to ecstasy themselves as soon as possible, so that they can then help others.

Distinguishing the *How* and the *Why* of Your Suffering

You must learn to distinguish the instrument of your suffering (the *how*) from the cause of your suffering (the *why*). All day long you must fight against the world view of ignorance and self-existence. You must identify that the bad event happening to you now has been created or caused by your past acts in the past.

The natural reaction to every bad thing in your life is exactly the cause that makes it happen again in the future. This is the wheel of knives. Your normal reaction of blaming anybody or anything other than yourself will cause the same pattern of suffering in the future.

The Correlations

In ACI Course five on Karma, Je Tsongkapa taught that there are four specific results of committing sexual misconduct:

1. You will continue to enjoy doing it.
2. You will be reborn in a lower realm.
3. You will lose the person in your relationships to someone else, because you have not respected someone else's partner.
4. You will live in an environment which is polluted, dirty, or smells bad.

Every bad deed you do similarly has four bad results. The Wheel of Knives goes into more detail about the specific karmic consequences of committing specific mis-deeds.

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For example, the instrument (the *how*) of someone's backache might be rubbing vertebrae and the loss of cartilage, but the reason *why* they have a backache is that they have hurt someone else in the past. Only by curing the karmic causes can you make your backache go away. If the operation works, the reason why it works is that your karma to have the backache wore out. If you understand these relationships you can design your Buddha paradise. The reading for this class allows you to reconstruct or profile how you used to be in your past lives by identifying the problems you are having now.

Identifying the Real Enemy

About 25 pages into the Wheel of Knives text, Master Dharma Rakshita says "wait a minute – I'm getting all these bad karmic results because I'm cherishing myself and I don't understand emptiness. Now I know who the demon is here – it's my own selfish mind and ignorance of emptiness! Now I'm going to use the wheel of knives to murder this true enemy, this henchman of the devil."

So your real enemy is your tendency to grasp at taking care of yourself first before helping other people; and you can only have this selfish habit if you don't understand emptiness. Mis-understanding where things in your world come from is keeping you from eliminating the habit of self-cherishing.

After you understand that your specific problems today come from specific mis-deeds you committed in the past, you should want to do something to fix the bad karma.

How Karma Is Carried in the Mind Stream

As you observe yourself doing some mis-deed, your mind records it perfectly as imprints. Every split second of your action makes a tiny subtle impression. Each instantaneous karmic imprint is destroyed in a flash, and the power of the destruction of each discrete imprint perpetuates the energy. This is the process through which negative and positive energy is maintained in the mind stream over millions of years. These impressions in your mind stream are powerful enough that when they ripen in your mind they force you to see certain things. Nothing in your world is good or bad from its own side – it's coming from your own karmic projections. You experience your world as being just as real as if it wasn't coming from your own mind, and at the time that karma ripens you have no choice about it – you are forced to see things based on your past deeds. Things hurt because they are projections of your own mind.

... It's Because the Wheel of Knives Has Turned On Me Again ...

So, for example, the reason you have painful emotions is that you caused others psychological pain. The way to get rid of your emotional pain is to practice *tong-len* on others and pretend to take away their emotional pain.

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Secondly, the reason you suffer at work from a bossy manager, is because in the past you have been arrogant to those lower than you. To get rid of your bossy manager, you must force your own body and mind into the service of others.

Thirdly, the reason you are forced to hear unpleasant speech from others is that you have said bad things about others in the past. The antidote is to only talk badly about your own bad speech towards others.

Fourthly, the reason you see things as something unpleasant is because you have seen your world as something less than totally pure in the past. The antidote is to practice seeing your world as totally pure. This practice is called *namdak*. You try to see the silver lining in every unpleasant thing that happens to you. It's a kind of benevolent paranoia where you think that everybody's out to help you. You think that the whole world is full of enlightened beings who are secretly plotting to get you enlightened. The movie Truman's World is about this. The less you think like this, the more your world will seem unpleasant to you.

How to Fix the Wheel of Knives

You can use this class's reading to identify the karmic causes you created in the past that are screwing up your life right now. Then you can fix your problems. You may not be creating these causes currently, but **the way to fix your old bad karma is to be extremely careful about doing these bad deeds right now**. For example, if you are experiencing the karmic results of lying, but you are generally a truthful person these days, to clean up the problem you must be the most fastidiously truthful person in your town. Be very very strict about this misdeed over a period of time, and watch your reality change. This careful restraint is the essence of the practice called the Four Powers, which is a way to purify your old bad karma.

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Class Nine: The Wheel of Knives, Part II

TSUNCHA KORLO **The Wheel of Knives.** This class is part two of the Wheel of knives circle Knives. It is a text for developing a good heart, written by Dharma Rakshita. The wheel of knives is a weapon like a ninja star that you throw and comes back like a boomerang and cuts you badly. It represents every bad thing that happened to you in your life. The first half of the *lojong* text describes how every bad thing has come from your doing a similar harmful thing to someone previously. It describes the suffering you experience, the specific cause that created it, and the way to avoid it in the future. It all boils down to stopping ignorance, which is the root cause of all your problems. You must realize that all your pain is coming from your past deeds, not from what other people are doing to you.

The Lord of Death Attacks His Two Enemies

At this point in the text, Dharma Rakshita starts to get mad and goes after the real enemy, the one who has been making him commit these mis-deeds and experience all of the suffering they cause. He starts to change into another person as he gets very angry at the two states of mind which are his true enemy:

རང་གཅེས་འཇིན།

RANG CHENDZIN **Self-cherishing.** This is the state of mind that watches out for self cherishing number one; it only takes care of yourself and ignores others.

བདག་འཇིན།

DAK DZIN **Grasping to a self.** This state of mind looks at yourself and self-existence grasping doesn't understand the emptiness of you. You believe you have some existence from your own side. If you can escape this enemy, you can reach your goals.

At this point, Dharma Rakshita turns strongly on these two enemies and determines that he will go after them and wipe them out completely. When you get in an upsetting situation, self-cherishing (*rang chendzin*) is the attitude that only concentrates on your discomfort and quickly forgets your intention to help other beings. It's the natural reaction of feeling that "I'm the most important person around, and I'm not getting what I want right now." Grasping to a self (*dak dzin*) is more subtle and is actually the cause of self-cherishing – it is the mind that thinks that the things that are bothering you are coming from their own side, and not from your past karma. The proof that your problems are coming from your own side is that other people could interpret these same situations in a very different way. The attitude of self-grasping prevents you from seeing that if you would only react ethically in bothersome situations, these types of problems would eventually go away, because they are only your projections.

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The Two Legs of the Angel of Death

Dharma Rakshita now determines that he will seek out this enemy and will use the same wheel of knives that caused his suffering to attack the enemy. He invokes the angel of wrath, Yamari, who has certain characteristics that have the power to destroy self-cherishing and grasping to self-existence.

བདེན་གཉིས།

DEN NYI **The two realities.** There are two realities going on around you all the time. The first, called **deceptive or false reality** (*kundzob denpa*), is you and your world which are created by your projections. The nature of this reality is deceptive because you are always thinking that your world, especially the things that upset you, are self-existently bothersome. All the appearances of your world are deceptive in this way. The other reality, called **ultimate reality** (*dundam denpa*), is the fact that nothing exists in any other way other than your projections – this is what emptiness means. You first understand ultimate reality intellectually, as it is described here. Later you will see emptiness directly; at this point you will see directly that there is a separate reality going on around us all the time which you never saw before, and it is a higher reality which is a perfect, crystal, diamond reality. Nirvana is defined as using this perception of ultimate reality to stop all of your bad thoughts permanently. If you have a true grasp of these two realities, you can use the wheel of knives to rip apart the enemies of self-cherishing and grasping to self-existence. So the first quality of the angel of death is to stand on the two legs of understanding the two truths or two realities – this is a strong foundation.

The Two Eyes of the Angel of Death

ཐབས་ཤེས།

TAP SHE **Method and wisdom.** Method refers to the first four bodhisattva method wisdom perfections: giving, living an ethical way of life, overcoming anger, and taking great joy in doing good deeds. These positive energies will create the physical body of a Buddha. Wisdom refers to the understanding of the two truths described above. It comes from perfectly practicing the last two perfections: meditation and wisdom, and it will create in you the state of mind of a Buddha. So the angel of death stares down his enemies (self-cherishing and grasping to self-existence) with these two fierce eyes of method and wisdom.

The Four Fangs of the Angel of Death

སྤོབས་བཞི།

TOB SHI **The four forces.** The angel of death's four fangs represent the activity force four of purifying your old bad karma. Understanding the two truths enables you to not collect any new bad karma, and having method and wisdom enables you to collect new good karma; but to be a complete tantric monster you still must polish off your old bad karma using the four forces. The essence of the four forces is to

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carefully avoid the behaviors and thoughts that are the cause of the specific problems you are having in your life. You can now wipe out the enemy which is your misunderstanding emptiness and resulting selfishness.

Is the Angel of Death Just a Metaphor?

Is this tantric angel of death with these three qualities just a metaphor? Is there really an eight-foot monster walking around somewhere? It's not a metaphor. This being does exist, and it is created by those spiritual qualities existing within you. These tantric deities are not made of flesh and bone. They are made of your projections which you can have if you get these spiritual realizations. Like everything else, tantric deities are created by your own karma, especially your own thoughts. These beings will appear to you as you achieve these qualities. It doesn't come primarily from an initiation ceremony; it comes from your internal spiritual qualities. They are made of your spiritual qualities, just like everything else in your world, including the unpleasant things in your life. If you change your karma, you can meet different types of beings. The reality around you can actually change; it's not just your imagination, and it can be maintained. You can become Tara if you practice carefully and watch your vows regularly.

With the roar of hell smash now the skull of my misperceptions, the ones who have wasted my life. Bring your death to the heart of this butcher, my greatest enemy. You have to start becoming the angel of death and go after the enemies of self-cherishing and ignorance. You have to get nasty and smash the skull of your misperceptions.

ཏོཀ་པ།

TOKPA **A wrong idea**, which means here the misperception of things as self-existent. (*Tokpa* is a homonym – spelled differently it means *high spiritual realization*.) If you smash the idea that things are coming from their own side, it gets frustrating as you realize that all the bad things happening to you are coming from your karma; but it's liberating because now you can get rid of your problems. Because everything is nothing but a projection of your mind, anything is possible, including tantric paradise in this life.

The Wheel of Karma Can Wipe Out Your Two Enemies

ལམ་གྱི་འཁོར་ལོ།

LE KYI KORLO **The wheel of karma.** Karma means anything you ever do, say karma of wheel or think. Dharma Rakshita now calls it the wheel of karma. You can use the wheel to cut out your own enemy of grasping to a self, because he is also not self-existent. Your self-cherishing and ignorance are also just a projection of your mind – they don't even exist at all from their own side. The wheel of karma can be used to eliminate your two enemies:

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1. **Self-cherishing can be eliminated** by practicing *tong len* -- a breathing practice where you take away others' pain and give them happiness; this will eliminate your selfishness.
2. The **ignorance that see things as self-existent can be eliminated** with wisdom, especially studying emptiness as presented in the Diamond Cutter Sutra.

Buddhas Gather the Two Collections

ཚོགས་གཉིས།

TSOK NYI **The two collections** of method and wisdom. Buddhas don't collect collection two karma -- they gather the two collections. If you practice the first four perfections over and over with wisdom that understands emptiness, you begin to gather together an incredible mass of energy that is called the **collection of merit**, which gives you the physical body of a Buddha. It affects your inner spiritual body by opening up the little channels inside every time you help somebody or have a little kind thought toward somebody -- especially if you do it with an understanding of emptiness. When the channels are not open you have to get old and die. When they open up completely you become a Buddha. The second collection is the **collection of wisdom** which comes from meditating on emptiness enough to transform your mind into a Buddha's mind.

Bodhisattvas Relocating

Then Dharma Rakshita says that until we reach enlightenment, in the meantime may we love and cherish each other as one. Then he says, "and in those days as well may I find the strength to dwell alone within the three realms of misery if this would be of service to a single other being." He's saying that he would be willing to go down and live in hell -- or go live in New York City -- I would move from my happy home where I'm completely satisfied and go to some lousy place if it would help some other living being. This is a prayer that he could take on the suffering of other beings. Then he prays that the sufferings of hell would be transformed into bliss.

This transformation must happen because hell is a creation of bad karma and a real bodhisattva is quickly running out of bad karma. So it's impossible to literally take on the suffering of others, but trying to do so will get you to paradise. It's totally possible that someone could do or say something nasty to you and before it reaches you it turns into something totally pleasant like a rain of flowers. This is the emptiness of others' actions toward you. *No one else can hurt you. Only your karma can hurt you.*

As you improve your behavior and keep your vows more carefully, you will start to perceive the events and people that used to bother you as the sweetest, holiest, most beautiful things that ever happened to you. This is called living in a world where nothing is coming from its own side. It is possible to turn weapons into flowers. The events that

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hurt you now -- like someone lying to or cheating you -- will turn into some holy thing that you really like. You will see them as a completely different thing but they are the same event exactly, but your karma and your projections have changed.

The Face In the Mirror Is No Face Itself

Dharma Rakshita now gives several analogues for emptiness: the face in a mirror is not the real person, and a torch circling quickly is not a solid circle of light. Fog banks have no solid existence either. The real meaning of the phrase, "things are an illusion" is this: **Understanding that everything comes from something else is to see that nothing exists by itself alone.** You must teach these points carefully to others. Emptiness always implies dependent origination, meaning that everything is coming from the projections of your own mind. Things are an illusion because they are coming from your own mind. This means that when anything unpleasant happens to you, it is the result of you not keeping your vows.

Master Dharma Rakshita now says that your enemy of misunderstanding things doesn't exist at all. Your enemy does exist, but his statement means that it doesn't exist from its own side. Your very ignorance which misunderstands the emptiness of all things has its own emptiness, and this is why you can eliminate your ignorance.

Filling a Pitcher Drop by Drop

If you filled up a water pitcher drop by drop, it is not filled by any one of the drops, either the first or the last ones. This refers to Master Nagarjuna's statement that things are not their parts alone, their parts all together, both, or neither. We tend to think that things are their parts all together, but the point is that things are only the sum of their parts after your perceptions are added to the equation. Your karma which forces you to see all the parts as a whole is what makes the whole exist.

The Reflection of the Moon in a Tea Cup

When you see the reflection of the moon in a tea cup, is the moon really there? No. It's just that conditions have come together -- a smooth tea surface in the cup and the moon up in the sky -- which make it look like the moon is in the tea cup. Your whole reality is like this. Things that bother you are only reflections of your karma. They don't come from their own side.

Because things are an illusion you must do good deeds. Your good deeds create a pleasant illusion, and your bad deeds create an unpleasant illusion. This is what it means when he says, "...if only in a mirror."

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Very Dangerous Lines

“There is nothing you should practice” means there is nothing you should practice *that comes from its own side*. It’s all the creation of your karma. “Strip everything of your projections” means try to understand that your world and everything you like and don’t like in your world is the play of your karmic projections. “Leave your mind as it came from the beginning that never was” is a reference to “the primordial state” or your “Buddha nature,” which is the emptiness of your mind which is totally pure. The fact that your own mind is also just a projection is what gives you hope that you can become a Buddha. “Live in a place called ‘as it is,’” refers to the real nature of things as being the collaboration of karma and emptiness. This is the eternal marriage of karma and emptiness. You must be careful to teach people these lines correctly. **Because everything is an illusion, you must keep your vows.** So if you have a very bad emotion, go attack your own self-cherishing and ignorance with the ferocity of a wrathful monster.

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Class Ten: Review

Metaphors for the Four Attachments

This material is from class six (homework question #5). The four attachments were revealed by Manjushri to Sachen, the first great forefather of the Sakya lineage:

1. Anyone attached to this life is no Dharma practitioner.
2. Anyone attached to the three realms has no renunciation.
3. Anyone attached to their own needs alone is no bodhisattva.
4. If you grasp to things as self-existent you have no world view.

Sachen's son, the Sakya Pandita, described a metaphor for each of the four attachments, along with an antidote, and a result.

<u>Metaphor:</u>	<u>Antidote:</u>	<u>Result:</u>
1. This life is like a bubble. It can end in a second.	Meditate on death.	Your practice of Dharma becomes Dharma.

Make sure your priorities are right. Keep pushing in your practice, even if you have to risk everything. Never be satisfied until you reach the highest practices, the highest goal.

2. Eating poison.	Think of the problems of this vicious circle.	Your Dharma practice becomes a Path.
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When you reject the New York Times worldview, you have nothing left but the path. You may live in a vacuum for awhile, and then build up your own worldview, if the primary reason for your existence is Dharma.

3. Killing the son of a powerful king.	Bodhichitta -- the wish for enlightenment.	Removes the first great mistake of the Path (not living for others).
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If you kill the son of a powerful enemy, he'll get even, so your satisfaction is stupid. Looking out for your own needs will literally kill you - the thought of caring for others is essential to becoming enlightened. Bodhichitta will remove the fatal error of focusing on your own needs.

4. Grasping to a mirage as drinking water.	Not to hold to the two extremes.	Buddhahood.
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Grasping to a mirage is running to something that isn't there that will kill you.