

mandel

เพาตุดิ สิ้พ ฏิพ อูสพ จิร พิ รัสา รามูพ

sashi pukyi jukshing metok tram,

าราราสีรารดิ.ย.สีญายุมีม.ก.ร)

rirab lingshi nyinde gyenpa di,

เพรพาสูพาติรารูารมิทุพาริารุฐณากรารสิบุ

sangye shingdu mikte ulwar gyi,

१२र्चेग्गुब:इरु:न्य:बिन:य:ह्येन्न ॥

drokun namdak shingla chupar shok.

เพิ่าร้าญารูารฐามฐาณฑาริฐารานามิไ

Idam guru ratna mandalakam niryatayami.

Offering the Mandala

Here is the great Earth, Filled with the smell of incense, Covered with a blanket of flowers,

The Great Mountain, The Four Continents, Wearing a jewel Of the Sun, and Moon.

In my mind I make them The Paradise of a Buddha, And offer it all to You.

By this deed May every living being Experience The Pure World.

Idam guru ratna mandalakam niryatayami.



kyabdro semkye

sangye chudang tsokyi choknam la,

ไป๊ะ.ชึน.นะ.บ๊.นะนะนะเม็นสมุม

jangchub bardu dakni kyabsu chi,

าวาทาทิพาฐิสาพักพาวฏิพานลิาาพัวาสมพาฏิพา

dakki jinsok gyipay sunam kyi,

१२र्वे.ज.सर्द.हुर.जटश.मुग्र.दर्यीय.तर्य. ११

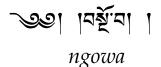
drola penchir sangye druppar shok.

Refuge and The Wish

I go for refuge To the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha Until I achieve enlightenment.

By the power Of the goodness that I do In giving and the rest,

May I reach Buddhahood For the sake Of every living being.



ا٢ؚٵ ؚڝٙڎ٢ٛڛٛ؆ڲٵۣڝٚڔٵ

gewa diyi kyewo kun,

ารพัร สุมพาพิ เวิพาส์ โทพาย์ โกพา เวิรา

sunam yeshe tsok-dzok shing,

ารสัราสุมสาพิเวิสาณสาฏุรารสิ

sunam yeshe lejung way,

ารมานาลูาสาธิพาวรัสานราวุศสา 11

dampa kunyi topar shok.

Dedication of the Goodness of a Deed

By the goodness Of what I have just done May all beings

Complete the collection Of merit and wisdom,

And thus gain the two Ultimate bodies That merit and wisdom make.



าสิุ้สานาสูามิราพรพาสูพาริสานีาธิา

tonpa lame sanggye rinpoche,

ાર્ગ્સેન્ગ્ય સુએન્ગ્ન અંદેશ રેન યેં ઢા

kyoppa lame damchu rinpoche,



drenpa lame gendun rinpoche,



kyabne konchok sumla chupa bul.

A Buddhist Grace

I offer this To the Teacher Higher than any other, The precious Buddha.

I offer this To the protection Higher than any other, The precious Dharma.

I offer this To the guides Higher than any other, The precious Sangha.

I offer this To the places of refuge, To the Three Jewels, Rare and supreme. THE ASIAN CLASSICS



The Asian Classics Institute **Course IX: The Ethical Life** Level One of Buddhist Discipline (Vinaya)

Course Syllabus

Reading One

- Subject: The meaning of vinaya; review of the literature on Buddhist discipline; discussion of the benefits of an ethical way of life; and the motivation for taking vows
- Reading: Je Tsongkapa's Epistle to Ngawang Drakpa on the Occasion of the Ordination of the First Monks of Gyalrong

Reading Two

Subject: Overview of all the major subjects covered in the most important root text for the teachings on Buddhist discipline

Reading: A topical outline of *The Wishing Jewel*, a commentary to the *Sutra* on Discipline by Chone Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748).

Reading Three

- Subject: Preliminary sections of the Sutra on Discipline; subjects in the study of Buddhist discipline; the basic nature of the vow of individual freedom; the types of vows
- Reading: Essence of the Ocean, a summary of the vows of individual freedom by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419), with a commentary by Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851) entitled Daymaker, folios 1A-4B

Reading Four

- Subject: Grouping of the vows; description of the one-day vow; description of the lifetime layman's vow; general description of the novice vow
- Reading: Essence of the Ocean and Daymaker, folios 4B-7A

Reading Five

- Subject: General description of the intermediate nun's vow; general description of the full monk and full nun's vows
- Reading: Essence of the Ocean and Daymaker, folios 7A-9A

Reading Six

- Subject: Who can take the vows; how the vows are lost; benefits of keeping the vows
- Reading: Essence of the Ocean and Daymaker, folios 9A-13A

Reading Seven

- Subject: Avoiding the ten non-virtues; the types of karmic results; the correlation between specific non-virtues and their karmic results
- Reading: *The Great Book on the Steps of the Path,* by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419), folios 118B-120B

Reading Eight

- Subject: Preliminary sections of the teaching; the qualities of a Buddha; the lineages of the tradition; extraordinary features of the teaching on the steps; the benefits of putting the steps into practice
- Reading: *The Song of My Spiritual Life,* by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419), with *Illumination of the Essence,* a commentary by the first Changkya Rinpoche, Ngawang Lobsang Chunden (1642-1714), folios 1A-4A

Reading Nine

- Subject: Taking yourself to a spiritual guide; introduction to the three scopes; description of the steps of the path shared with those of lesser scope; the meditation on death; contemplation of the sufferings of the lower realms; going for refuge; the contemplation of karma, and the four forces
- Reading: *The Song of My Spiritual Life* and *Illumination of the Essence,* folios 4A-6B

Reading Ten

- Subject: Description of the steps of the path shared with those of medium scope; contemplating the first two noble truths; description of the steps of the path for those of greater scope; the wish for enlightenment; the six perfections; entering the secret path
- Reading: *The Song of My Spiritual Life* and *Illumination of the Essence,* folios 6B-7B

The Asian Classics Institute **Course IX: The Ethical Life**

Reading One: Je Tsongkapa's *Epistle on Ethics*

The reading for this class consists of the entire text of Je Tsongkapa's *Epistle to* Ngawang Drakpa on the Occasion of the Ordination of the First Monks of Gyalrong. Master Ngawang Drakpa, also known as Tsako Wonpo ("the friar of the lineage of the Kings of Tsako"), was one of Je Tsongkapa's closest disciples. After he had trained him in the Dharma, Je Tsongkapa sent Ngawang Drakpa to a distant region in east Tibet, entrusted with the mission of establishing a number of monasteries and training Buddhist monks.

The ensuing correspondence between the teacher and his faraway disciple has provided us with several true classics of Buddhist thought, including the following demonstration of the role of an ethical life in developing one's ability to meditate and perceive emptiness. Another letter from Je Tsongkapa to Ngawang Drakpa during this period contains the famous Three Principal Paths, which along with the commentary of Pabongka Rinpoche has been translated in the book *The Principal Teachings of Buddhism*. The introduction to this book also contains more detail on Master Ngawang Drakpa's life, and his close relationship to Je Tsongkapa.

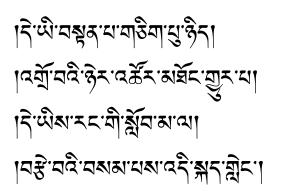
Please note that the version of the letter available for translation contained a number of printing errors that have been corrected to the best of our ability; we hope to obtain another edition later for comparison.

الم مَنْ سَرَحَ مَعْ مَنْ الْحَرْضَ الْحَرْضَ الْحَرْضَ الْحَرْضَ الْحَرْضَ الْحَرْضَ الْحَرْضَ الْحَرْضَ الْحَ I bow down to my Lama, Gentle Voice.

าปี่งเข้าหางรูสงเหลุงเข้าป่า । झुः कुः रुदे न्य के र्योग का गी सुव्या

વિંદ્ર આયાં સુરાય છે. યો છે ચારી છે ચારી છે ચારી છે ચારી છે ચારી છે. ચારી છે ચારી છે ચારી છે ચારી છે ચારી છે. ચ ูลู ฉิราชิ้สานาริหายูญาจส์ณา

I bow down to the matchless Teacher, Unknown to us our most loving friend, An ultimate and a peerless companion, The one brother we the needy possess.



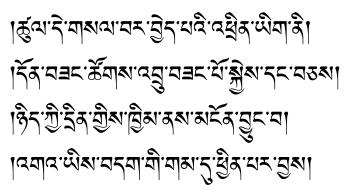
I have seen that the only sustenance For living kind is his teachings alone; And so in love I impart these words To the one who is my disciple.

สูญาวาสุมมาฏิเวมานจิเชิม ાર્બેન્સ્સ્યુપ્લ્ટેન્સ્પ્સાસાલુસપ્ય ાસું ફિંન મેં મું સુર રેથા I

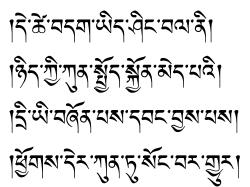
The high Dharma of the Victorious Ones Is a goldmine of happiness for all beings; And you, my son, are its fearless keeper— I pray you may reign for a thousand years.

ๅฐฉานฉิาฉหูณาดูฦฺณาริาฌิราฉยังานาพิๅ ୲ୄୣୄ୶ୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄୄ୶ୄୠୡ୲୵ୠୄୡ୲୵ୠୡ୲୵ୠୡ୲

Wise one the news is that you have brought The sunlight of the Able One's word To that dark far land, and filled it with princes Of Buddha kings practicing hard and pure.



A letter informing me of these tidings, Lovely thoughts in lovely stars of words, Has due to your kindness reached me here, Borne by several freed from the family life.



When the note touched my hand The wind of your immaculate deeds Swept up the cotton wisp of my mind And carried my thoughts to you there.

।ମି'ମ୍ୟା'ହିଁସା'ୟ'ର୍ଜ୍ଭଦ୍ୟାସ୍ଥିଷଷ୍ୟ'ସକ୍ଷ୍ୟସ'ୟ'କ୍ସି। ।ମି'ଭି'ସ୍ୱାଣ୍ୟ'ଶି'ଦ୍ୱମୁଦ୍ୟ'ସ'ଭିଶ'ସ'ସ'ଷ୍ଟ୍ରିସ୍ୟା

This too is why so much of the Dharma, so high and spoken so pure,
Has by the Buddhas been devoted to the way of discipline.
It explains as well why all those masters who understand the order
Of subjects to learn all take delight in the teachings on discipline.

The training on perfect concentration, quietude, must come Before one can ever the develop the one

Course IX: The Ethical Life **Reading One**

on wisdom, the ultimate vision. Only a trace of this truth can be heard anymore, and not a peep On the fact that good concentration can't come without first training in ethics.

ู |เกลาณิสาซ์สาณากรา กรารนณาราณิลา וקאיםשאידם היפלדים שמיםפישמן ารราสาสาชิรช์สาสสานสานสาน ู เสู่ณาผิมมาวฐารณาวริ์สามารมามณิสู่ณา Some people find only the courage to pledge themselves in word to this training, Then later discard their commitments like trash; they are lowest in a world of low.

The way of the holy is different; they make

they may have committed to.

ારે ભૂમ અર્કેદ સ્થા છેય પારે ક્રીં ગાસુયા ભા

every conceivable effort In keeping whatever ethical rules

ושביקבישביק זֹדָאַזיביפאיבפאיב ู่ เรลาระาวๆาพัราร์าฮาสิญาพัราฏิพา าณ์สานฉิณมารูาดูสามานฉิารุกราน์ฉิารุา

ומקקיאאיתקמיקדיקֿקיאיקישיאקן ารทิเวลิเรมิญพานาทราทราลรัราวิเญ

Course IX: The Ethical Life Reading One

Once you have realized this fact you must rely on watchfulness And awareness; constantly checking all three of the gateways for any wrong deeds, Depending as well on a sense of care and propriety to control With all your strength the wild horse of the senses, seeking to keep

This steed from taking you to a path that leads you all astray.
With this state of mind you'll be able to hold your concentration perfectly
Fixed on any virtuous object at your heart's content.
Thus is the ethical life commended for perfect concentration.

୲ଦ୕୕୕୕ୖ୶୴୲ୖୖୖୢୖୖୢଽଽ୴ୡୖୄୄୖଽୡ୕୕୕୕୕୕୕୕୕୕୕ୖୄ୶୕ୖ୕୴୲୷୳ଽ୷ଽ୷ଊୖୡ୷୲ ୲୵ୖ୶୲୷ୖୡ୕ୖ୶ୠ୕୶ୡ୲୷ଽୢୖୡ୕୶୶୷ଽୖଈୖ୷ୠୖୖୖୖୖ୶ ୲୵୷୷ୣୠୣ୷ୠୄୖୠୢୠୄ୵୷ୠୄୢୄୖୠୄୠ୲ ୲ଽୢଽ୶୲ୠ୵ଈୖ୵ୠୖଡ଼ୖୠୄୠ୲ୠ୲ୢୄଈ୶୲ୄୢଌୠ୲ୡ୲୶ୡୄୖୠ୲

This state of mind is totally free of the dirt of broken morality, And is never disturbed or distracted from the object of goodness you choose; Therefore suchness, the lack of a self, is perfectly clear to it, Just like the moon's reflection on water undisturbed and crystal clear.

ારે સુરુ નજ્ઞુવ પ ગાસુસ શૈ બાસ શૈ ગાસ્તા બિંદ્ર સ સું દેવાસ પર ભેસ પ સે સેંદ વાસુસા

୲ୠୡ୕୲ଽ୳ୄୠୄୖଽ୵ଊ୲୕ଽ୶୲ଊ୕ୄଈୖଽୖୄଽଽୖ୳ୖୄ୴ୢୖଌ୵୲ ୲ୠ୲ସଈ୲୳୲୳୴ୢଈୢୖୠ୲ୠ୶୲ୢୖୄଌ୲ୖୢୢୢୢୡ୕ୄଽୖ୵୶୲ୡୢ୲ଋ୲ଊ୲୴ୄୠୠ୲

A perfect understanding of all of the essential points like these Within the path of the three trainings depends precisely upon An understanding of all the three collections of Buddhist scripture; Thus you should take yourself to a master and train in the three collections.

ાત્રસૂતચય્વવે ત્વોંચ્ય પસ્સુત્વ પછેત્વ બેચા શ્ચ વવે તે સ્યાયચ્ચ બેચ રેવા એવ પત્ર વાસુત્વ શ્વે વવે બ એ ગુ વ્યવાય વાય ગુ સૂત્વ શ્વે વવે બ એ ગુ વ્યવાય બાળ વા દુ સૂત્વ

The greatest teachers of all time have said, no single time,That the whole point of the trainings is reaching actual attainments.Take then whatever amount of the teachings you understand so far,

And without procrastination, with speed,

put them to work in your life.

I have written the above lines as just a very brief presentation of the reasons why an ethical way of life is the very basis of the Buddhist path. As such I hope that you will cherish them, and review them again and again. I am extremely pleased by the fact that you have been able to ordain so many individuals, and give so many teachings on discipline, there in what from a Buddhist point of view is a wild and barbarian land.

If one focusses primarily on the taking of vows, and then fails in the practical aspects of keeping them seriously and restoring them when they are damaged, then there is absolutely no way that one's practice of the ethical way of life can be pure. As such it is essential that you now go on to help your new monks keep their vows well by learning to identify what constitutes breaking them.

So too you must institute a regular practice of purification and restoration, whereby the monks learn to confess past errors and restrain themselves from future error, in the event that—because of one of the four factors, such as not understanding the vows properly—they should ever transgress them. They must learn never to take it lightly when they break a vow; they must be taught the proper methods of restoring vows in every instance where they are broken. In this way, and through developing a sense of shame and propriety, as well as watchfulness, awareness, and similar tools, they will come to lead a perfectly ethical way of life.

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From an overall point of view, the Buddhas have described certain benefits that derive from virtuous deeds, and serious problems that derive from nonvirtuous deeds. We tend to think of the benefits as something that has no relevance until we are lying on our deathbed. And we view the descriptions of the problems as though they were some kind of veiled threat. We should rather try to develop, in the very depths of our hearts, the recognition that they are absolutely true.

In a more specific sense, we must meditate extensively upon the benefits of maintaining an ethical way of life, and upon the serious problems of failing to maintain such a code. This will bring us to a full recognition of their truth. Should we fail to do so, and if keeping up this ethical way of life becomes for us something motivated only by a concern about how we look to others, or about the honor and gifts we might obtain thereby, then the real point of ethics is lost.

The obstacle that prevents us from leading an ethical way of life for the right reasons is our enthusiasm for the activities of our present rebirth. And this in turn comes from viewing our present life as though it were a place where we are going to be spending some substantial amount of time. The most profound cure for this way of thinking is to maintain, on many levels, an awareness of our coming death. As such it is absolutely essential that you meditate, again and again, on the fact that you will die.

เณฆามส์เน่า ริ์มีฆามร์รามส์เน่า พยุรามีสูง ญรามีสูรามิราสมฆารรา गविभालताम्, रात्रम् राय्रम् राय्रम् राय्रम् राय्रम् रायम् วูญริโ เวนานนิเพพาพาวาพฤญนาสุมพาผู้การเกิดสาวาฤการพาผูาผู้เรา ระเทศพราราวุธุญานจิริส์ สุมพาวรัฐ ธิราริพาพูารัฐมานารุราทศระวัญวิ ૡૹ੶૱ૣઽ੶ઌૢૹ੶૱ૹૹૻૢૼૼૼ૱ૡૹ੶૱ઌૹૻઌ૽ૼ૾૾ૹ૾ૹૻૡ૾ૢૻ૾૾ૹ૾૾ઽ૾૾ૹ૽ૣ૾ૡૻૻ૱૱ૡૻૹ૾ૣૹૡ ল্পবা

In a nutshell, the ability to perceive in detail the infallible workings of the deeds we do and the consequences we reap is a quality which is unique to beings who are omniscient. As such we must refer constantly to such scriptures as the *Sutra on Awareness*, the *Hundred Deeds*, the *Hundred Stories of Past Lives*, the *Sutra on the Wise and Foolish*, the *Accounts of Scripture*, and a wide variety of other sutras and classical commentaries.

By doing so we can make our recognition of the laws of karma and its consequences ever more firm. We must purify the bad karma we have collected in the past, until we reach the point where we are sure it has been erased. We must restrain ourselves from engaging in any new bad karma, until we reach the point where we are sure we have discontinued this behavior completely.

We must take the good karma we have been able to accomplish so far, and multiply its power through highly effective kinds of prayer. We must look at the good karma we have not yet been able to accomplish, and make it happen, not through any limited kinds of activity, but rather through a whole variety of different means.

Whatever of the above we may be able to carry out, it will all be infinitely more effective if we can learn to do it while keeping our minds soaked in the wish for enlightenment, whether in its full form, or even just in some partial form.

Remember too that the victorious Buddhas have recommended in countless open and secret scriptures that we seek the correct view of emptiness, the one that absolutely destroys every tendency to grasp to indications as objects themselves. This then allows us to avoid the two extremes of thinking either that things exist independently, or that—if they don't exist independently—they cannot exist at all.

A well-founded grasp of the laws of karma and its consequences complements correct view; the very activity of being extremely careful to do the right thing in the arena of good and bad deeds, down to the smallest detail of our lives, gives us the ability to eliminate in ourselves entirely the two extremes of thinking "everything exists" and "nothing can exist."

The vast majority of beings fall into one of two traps. Some have a misconception about things that are in nature empty which would necessitate their being unchanging. Others have a misconception which would obviate the

entire way in which deceptive reality exists; which would necessitate the end of these very objects.

The actual truth therefore is extremely difficult to perceive, and even among those who have the capacity to do so there are infinitely few who could ever become a vessel worthy to receive the teachings. Therefore anyone who has any hope of seeing these things must first address the causes that would bring it about; they must accumulate the power of good deeds and purify their bad deeds, and make a great many holy prayers. They must take themselves properly to a spiritual guide who is a master of these things, and acquaint themselves well with the scriptures that describe them. Finally they must seek the truth by using their intellect to examine closely every point, and never be satisfied with only a rough or incomplete understanding.

Your understanding of, and conviction in, all the points I have just explained will continue to increase if you alternate your time between meditating upon them and studying them formally. This same practice will simultaneously begin to work as a cure for all your mental afflictions. As such I entreat you to practice this way.

าวการิลินาท์ เนงาร์ทางการิสานการ

Your respect for the word of Those Gone to Bliss Is complete, and your intellect's power imposing; You walk in the footsteps of mighty beings With wisdom, my Ngawang Drakpa.

Come now, follow the things I've taught you, Make in your lives your deeds and prayers Match mine, and on our enlightenment day I'll give you the first sip of deathlessness.

(बिश्वायायदी के स्पान्त्रवा प्रयोग प्रयोग प्रयोग के के स्वान्त्र के के स्वान्त्र के के स्वान्त्र स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्र स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्य के स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्य के स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य के स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्र के स्वान्त्र स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त् स्वन्त्र स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य प्वत्य क्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान् स्वन्य क्वान्त्य स्वत्य स्वान्य प्वत्य स्वत्य स्वान्त्य स्वत्य स्वत्य क्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्वान्त्य स्व स्वन्य

The above is an epistle written to that great master of Tsako, the pure spiritual guide known as Ngawang Drakpa. It constitutes a reply to a communication from him describing how he had founded a very special group of monks by ordaining a number of disciples in the eastern land of Gyalrong, something that had never been done before. The reply itself was composed by the glorious monk Lobsang Drakpa [Je Tsongkapa], and dispatched from his place of retreat named Teura, near the place called Eisa. May goodness ever increase!

The Asian Classics Institute Course IX: The Ethical Life

Reading Two: Outline of the Sutra on Discipline (Vinaya Sutra)

The following is an outline of major points in *The Wishing Jewel*, a synopsis of Master Guna Prabha's *Sutra on Discipline (Vinaya Sutra)* by Chone Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748), author of the alternate textbook series of Sera Mey Monastic University.

I. A Preliminary Overview (starts folio 2A)

Includes:

A summary of how Lord Buddha became enlightened over a period in three stages of "countless" eons (2A).

The exact years at which Lord Buddha performed his major spiritual deeds (2B).

An explanation of why the teachings on discipline are the highest instruction of Lord Buddha (3A).

A summary of the canonical works on discipline, and their commentaries (3A).

II. Actual Explanation of Sections of the Root Text (3B)

A. Meaning of the name of the root text (3B)

B. Explanation of the translator's obeisance (4A)

C. Commentary upon the root text (4A)

1. Details of the statement of purpose (4A)

Includes details on the subject matter, the vows of individual freedom, and the eleven topics concerning the vows

- 2. Actual commentary (7A)
 - a. How to go from not having vows to having them (7A)

Includes: A discussion of the original and later rites for conferring the vows

A detailed treatment of those who can confer the vows (the different kinds of "abbots" and "masters") (9A)

An explanation of the different types of vows (10A)

Details on the measurement of days and months, necessary for properly dating an ordination; along with a brief presentation on Buddhist holidays (11A)

b. Once you have your vows, how to keep them from being damaged (15A)

1) Relying on an outer support, a monastic preceptor, to help keep your vows (15A)

Includes:

Great detail on the qualifications of a monastic preceptor (15A)

Requirements of a proper candidate for ordination (18B)

Description of the ordination of nuns (20A)

2) Relying on inner support, your own pure intentions, to help keep your vows (21A)

Course IX: The Ethical Life Reading Two

3) Keeping your vows through a good understanding of the factors that work against them (21A)

Description of how vows can be lost (21B)

An explanation of the five groups of vows (22A):

a) Explanation of each individual group

i) General treatment

- 1) Divisions (22B)
- 2) Groupings (22B)
- 3) Definitions (24A)
- 4) Enumeration (24B)
- 5) Order (24B)
- 6) Literal meanings (24B)

7) Consequences of breaking (24B)

- 8) Person (25A)
- 9) Benefits of keeping (25B)
- 10) Problems of breaking (25B)

ii) Specific treatment

1) The "defeat" group of vows (25B)

2) The "remainder" group of vows (31A)

3) The "cause of downfall" group of vows (32A)

4) The "individual confession" group of vows (41A)

5) The "bad deed" group of vows (41B)

b) A more general explanation (43A)

Includes: Details on how vows are damaged (43A)

Reasons why, under certain conditions, the vows may not form properly (44A)

Description of the vows of a novice monk, novice nun, and intermediate nun (44B)

Analysis of a number of ethical questions (45A)

Discussion of extenuating circumstances, such as temporary insanity (46A)

4) Keeping your vows through mastering the monastic practices (46A)

Includes:

A description of the seventeen foundations of monastic practice, grouped into the three broad categories of perfecting monastic practice (46B); the proper methods of sustenance (52B); and the performance of monastic rites (59B)

c) How to restore your vows, if they do happen to be damaged (62B)

Covers both restoration of vows after a downfall, and the restoration of unity after disputes

3. Ancillary points

Details on the painting of the Wheel of Life to be affixed to the entrance of temples, and its relation to the four noble truths (70B)

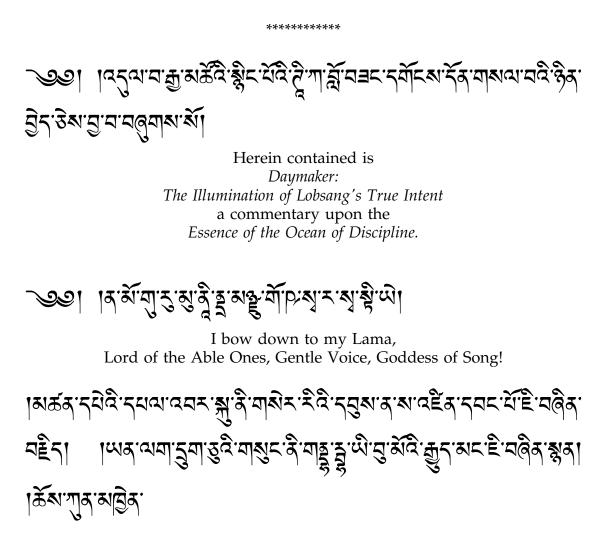
D. Concluding remarks

Notes on the composition of the commentary (71A)

The Asian Classics Institute Course IX: The Ethical Life

Reading Three: Introduction to the Vows of Individual Freedom

The following selection consists of the first part of *Daymaker* (*Nyin-byed*), composed by Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851) as a commentary to the *Essence of the Ocean of Discipline* ('*Dul-ba rgya-mtso'i snying-po*), a summary of the *vinaya* teachings by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).

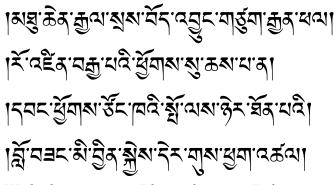


યરે શુર્વાશ્વ સે આવર ન્વનુદશ્વ દેશ શું શુરુ નુવા છે સુનુ ન દે ન જે સાથવા | વાશ્વ -ฦ฿ูลามิ อารุสูงญี่ ซ์ ภูลิ ละละลารุการ์ พิพ. จิพ. นา พธิ์รา

The major and minor marks of Your exalted body which blaze with glorious splendor Are as majestic as the lord of earth-holders in the center of his golden chains.

The sixty wonderful qualities possessed by Your exalted speech Are as sweet as the many-stringed lutes of the celestial musicians' daughters.

Your exalted mind perceives all things as apparent as the daymaker On the surface of a cloudless stretch in the vault of the expanse of sky. You, who are the indisputable master of each of the three mysteries— Those ornaments of infinite circles please grant auspiciousness here!



With deep respect I bow down to Lobsang, child of the goddess of space,
The sun who rose from Tsongka, over the tip of the eastern horizon.
Like an orb of fire with a thousand tongues of flame, he makes the mighty Victor's children—
Those crowning jewels who appeared in Tibet look just like ordinary beings.

พสัสาริสาญราสติลาญริกาสูรสานสาริ ารัสาวญิณาสูณามธ์สาชามีราวิที่ราสุมา ารราสุดสาสุทรสาสริลิาสูาสราวริาสาวสิมพ

By churning the great ocean of the four groups of the Word That savior procured its very essence: this unprecedented classic on discipline. If you take this king of the lord of jewels and place it atop the victory banner Of this commentary on its meaning, it will cause the gentle rain Of your and my ultimate happiness to fall down upon this world.

If you're like a vessel that's unpolluted by the stench of partiality, And have the intelligence to distinguish between what's good and bad, If you've a mind at all like this, that is like an unconstricted space, Come and take the deathless nectar here in these well-spoken words!

I. THE PRELIMINARIES

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Now the revered King of the Dharma, the great Tsongkapa of the East, the one known as the glorious Lobsang Drakpa, renowned throughout the three lands, once composed a summary of the vows of individual freedom. This is the text entitled the *Shorter Essence of the Ocean of Discipline*. My explanation of this work has three divisions: the preliminaries, the actual explanation, and the conclusion. The preliminaries themselves have three parts: the benediction, the eulogy and prostration, and the pledge to compose the work.

THE BENEDICTION

The benediction is expressed in the first line of the text:

Om! May there be happiness and goodness.

รัส สิโ ଔଷ ଔସ ସିଷ୍ ଶ୍ରୁ ସା ସ୍ଟ୍ୟୁ ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଅଷ୍ The meaning of this line is as follows. The syllable *om* symbolizes the three mysteries—the exalted body, speech, and mind of the victorious Buddhas. As we intone this syllable, we bear in mind the beings that it represents. These are the victorious Buddhas—possessors of the three mysteries—along with their sons and daughters. And it is to them that we are making our supplication:

May all living beings enter the path that leads to the transitory *happiness* of humans and pleasure beings, or to the ultimate *goodness* of freedom and omniscience. Then may they reach the state where they possess these three mysteries, exactly as the victorious Buddhas do.

THE EULOGY AND PROSTRATION

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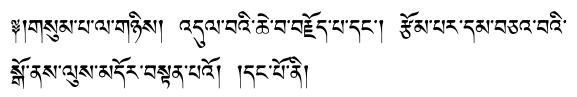
The eulogy and prostration are expressed in the next line of the text:

I bow down to the Omniscient One.

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Our Lord Lama, at the outset of his treatise, makes a prostration for the benefit of his disciples. He does so for a number of reasons: to help his disciples understand the greatness of the Buddha, to increase his own accumulation of merit, to emulate the holy ones, and so on. Most especially, he wishes to conform with the decree of old. He makes his prostrations with great faith and reverence, turning his thoughts to the unique virtues of our Teacher. Hair standing on end, he joins his palms devotedly atop his head. He bends *down*, *bowing* himself *to the Omniscient One*—to the Buddha, the Transcendent Victor, who directly perceives all knowable things, including even the most subtle workings of actions and their consequences. Je Tsongkapa expresses his obeisance in his words, thoughts, and deeds, with crystalline admiration.

THE PLEDGE TO COMPOSE THE WORK



The third preliminary, the pledge to compose the work, has two sections: extolling the greatness of the code of discipline, and summarizing the entire body of the text in the pledge itself. The first of these is contained in the first verse of the root text:

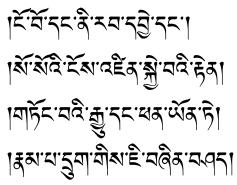
There is something which, if you rely on it, Is the way to travel with ease to the city of freedom; The supreme essence of the teachings of those Gone to Bliss: It is that which is called "individual freedom."

The "something" in the root text refers to the very root of the Buddha's teachings; that is, to the vows of individual freedom and the books on the code of discipline which take these vows as their subject matter. Suppose you *rely on* this: you take these vows of individual freedom, and you keep them well. This then is *the way*, the staircase, for *traveling with ease* (without any great difficulty) up *to the city of* the higher realms, *freedom*, and omniscience.

This "something" is also the *supreme essence* (*snying-po*) *of the teachings of* the Buddhas (*those* who have "*Gone to Bliss*"), the very lifeblood (*snying*) that allows these teachings to survive in our world.

This "something," *that which* we *call* the "vows of *individual freedom,"* is so named because those individuals who take and then keep them properly will escape the cycle of suffering, whereas those who don't, will not.

The second section, where the entire body of the text is presented briefly through a pledge to compose the work, is contained in the next verse of the root text:



In keeping, I shall explain them in six categories: Their basic nature, the way they are divided, Their individual descriptions, who can take them, How they are lost, and the benefits they give.

ठेशपश्र हेंदर्या देंदरी मेंटर् हेंशपरे रेंग्वर मुंहेंशपर देंग्वर में हे पर दे र रेंग्वर ญิษัญมานลาร์วันารราสิ่า จังสราญิษัญมานลารการกิเรรา จังสราริจากกราบิ สัญหาราส์เสิร์รัสาระได้เลาะบิ ส์เลาะบิสัญหาราสิเลระได้ สาระบิ ส์เลาะบิ สมนารุกาทิมาลา สูญาววิราทิรมานายาผูราวาลรายวิราสุรายรายวิราสุราย মর্মা

Je Tsongkapa is saying that he is *going to explain* the vows of individual freedom, which he only touched upon above, *in keeping* with the true intent of the victorious Buddhas. He is going to do so *in six categories: their basic nature*, *the way they are divided* into eight types, *their individual descriptions, who can take them, how they are lost, and the benefits they give* when you keep them properly.

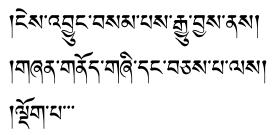
II. THE ACTUAL EXPLANATION

My explanation of the text itself will follow these same six categories: their basic nature, the way they are divided into eight types, their individual descriptions, who can take them, how they are lost, and the benefits they give when you keep them properly.

THE BASIC NATURE OF THE VOWS

This category has two parts: an identification of the basic nature of the vows of individual freedom, and the positions of different Buddhist schools as to whether their basic nature is physical or mental.

The identification of the basic nature of the vows is covered in the following lines of the root text:



It is a turning away from harming others, And its basis, caused by an attitude Of renunciation...

Here Je Tsongkapa is saying that one's commitment to these vows should be *caused by*—that is, motivated by—*an attitude* where one feels a deep disgust for every single inch of the cycle of suffering life, and has thus decided to *renounce* it. You should not take the vows simply because you are imitating someone else, or just following the crowd.

The basic nature of the vows then is as follows. In the presence of your Lama, you agree and pledge yourself to *turn away from harming others;* you agree to refrain from the seven physical and verbal deeds which are wrong by nature, *and* to avoid their *basis* as well. Here the word "basis" refers either to the three

mental bad deeds that act as a foundation for the seven, or else to those bad deeds which were prohibited by Lord Buddha.

*।याहेश्वायांकी

The positions of different Buddhist schools as to whether their basic nature are physical or mental is expressed in these lines:

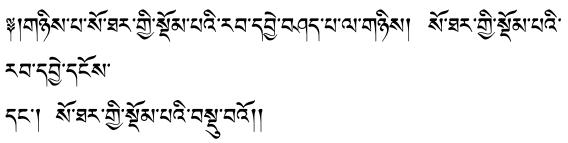
...It is physical and verbal karma Which they assert is physical matter. The others say it is the intention to give up And its seed as it continues in your mind. Thus our schools' positions are two: What the higher and lower assert.

It, meaning the basic nature of the individual freedom vows, *is physical and verbal karma*. According to the Abhidharma School this karma is a kind of invisible and ineffable *physical matter*. The Consequence section of the Middle Way School also *assert* that it *is physical matter*, but they say that it is physical matter belonging to the gateway of phenomena. *The others*—meaning the Sutrists, the Mind-Only School, and the Independent Section of the Middle-Way School—say that *it is the continued intention to give up* [bad deeds], *along with the seed* of this intention. *Thus* this verse explains that even in *our* own Buddhist *schools, two* dissimilar *positions* are *asserted* on this point in the tenets of *the higher and lower* schools.

The "invisible and ineffable form" mentioned above is explained as follows. In the first moment that the vows are taken, they consist of form which communicates the intent of the person taking the vows. After that moment they become a type of form which does not communicate this intent.

On the other hand the "intention to give up [the bad deeds]" is explained as being mental, and "its seed" is explained as being a changing thing which is neither mental nor physical. These then are the two viewpoints.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE VOWS



My explanation of the divisions of the individual freedom vows will have two sections: the actual division of individual freedom vows into categories, and a grouping of the vows.

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The actual divisions of the individual freedom vows are shown in these lines:



Staying close, close to virtue. Way to virtue, versed in virtue, And begging for virtue. These are The eight kinds of individual freedom.

The one-day vows are called "staying close" because they help you *stay close* to nirvana in the sense of taking you there. The lifetime vows for laymen and laywomen are called "close to virtue" because they help you be *close* to *virtue*, which here refers to nirvana. The vows of male novices and female novices are called "way to virtue" because those who possess these vows have entered the *way*, that is the path, which leads *to virtue*, again referring to nirvana. The vows of an intermediate nun are called "versed in virtue" because these women

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are *versing* themselves *in* the twelve rules, in order to be able to keep the vows of a fully ordained nun. Fully ordained monks and fully ordained nuns are called "begging for virtue" because they are *begging*, that is seeking, that state of *virtue*: nirvana. In this verse Je Tsongkapa is thus listing *the eight kinds of individual freedom vows*.

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Reading Four: A General Description of the Vows, Part One

The following selection consists of the second major section of *Daymaker (Nyin-byed)*, composed by Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851) as a commentary to the *Essence of the Ocean of Discipline ('Dul-ba rgya-mtso'i snying-po)*, a summary of the *vinaya* teachings by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).

* याहेराया है।

The grouping of the vows is given here:

The first three vows are for laypeople, The last five vows for the ordained.

Moreover, the eight classes of individual freedom vows mentioned above can be grouped according to who can take them. Here there are two broad groups: the vows which relate to laypeople, and the vows which relate to ordained people. The kinds of *vows* which relate to *laypeople are the first three:* one-day vows, the layman's lifetime vows, and laywoman's lifetime vows. The kind of *vows* which relate to those who are *ordained are the last five:* the vows of male novices, female novices, intermediate nuns, fully ordained nuns, and fully ordained monks.

INDIVIDUAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE VOWS

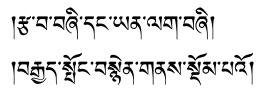
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The individual descriptions of the eight types of individual-freedom vows will subsume six sections: an identification of the one-day vows; the layperson's lifetime vows; the novice vows; the vows of an intermediate nun; the vows of a fully ordained nun; and the vows of a fully ordained monk.

One-Day Vows

The first section, the explanation of the one-day vows, has two points: an identification of what the one-day vow is, and an outline of the eight components which you agree to give up.

These lines of the root text identify the vow:



The one-day vow is to give up eight: The root four and the secondary four.

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The one-day vow is to agree *to give up*, for the length of a single twenty-four hour period, the *eight* components to be abandoned: sexual activity and the rest of *the root four* components, as well as the use of high or valuable seats, along with the rest of *the secondary four* components. This vow can be taken from someone who has already taken the one-day vow, and who holds either the lifetime vow of a layperson, or any higher freedom vow.

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The eight components to give up are enumerated in these lines:

The root four are sexual activity, Stealing, killing, and speaking lies. The secondary four are high valuable seats, Drinking alcohol, dancing and so on, Ornamentation and such, and food after noon. *The root four are sexual activity, stealing* something of value, *killing* a human or a human fetus, *and speaking lies* about your spiritual realizations. *The secondary four are* (1) making use of a *seat* or bed which is *valuable* in that it incorporates jewels or some other precious substance, or else which is *higher* than a cubit; (2) *drinking alcohol* or any brewed or concocted substance which causes an intoxicated state; (3) *dancing and "so on,"* which refers to singing and playing music, or else *ornamenting* yourself *and "such"*—that is, wearing jewelry or makeup; and finally (4) eating *food after noon*.

Lifetime Vows of a Layperson

The explanation of the lifetime vows of a layperson contains two points: the actual identification of these vows, and an explanation of the different categories of the vow.

Here first is the identification of the vows:

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The lifetime layperson's vow is to give up The five of killing, stealing, and lying, Adultery, and drinking intoxicants.

 \hat{q} શ્વાયા રેંત્રેને \hat{g} \hat{g} શ્વ સાય પ્રેંત્રેને \hat{g} \hat{g}

The procedure for taking *the lifetime vows of a layperson* is as follows. In the presence of a preceptor who holds at least these same vows, you begin with formally taking refuge. You next pledge that, for the length of your entire life, you will *give up* breaking the *five* basic rules, and avoid as well those actions which are inconsistent with the advices on going for refuge. The five rules here are to give up *killing* a human or human fetus; *stealing* anything of significant value (that is, anything worth more than a quarter of a *karshapana* [somewhere between an American quarter and a dollar]); *lying* about your spiritual attainments; committing *adultery* by having sexual relations with someone else's spouse; and *drinking* alcohol, or any substance which makes you *intoxicated*.

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The different categories of lifetime layperson's vows are presented in the following verse:

Keeping one of them, a couple, most, And keeping all; keeping celibacy, And a refuge layperson: these are the six. These consist respectively of agreeing To give up one, two, or three of the root four; To give up adultery and all sexual activity, And to keep just the lay vow of going for refuge.

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x_{3}^{2} α $\hat{\mathfrak{A}}^{2}$ π δ x_{3}^{2} $\hat{\mathfrak{A}}^{2}$ $\hat{\mathfrak{A}^{2}$ $\hat{\mathfrak{A}}^{2}$ $\hat{\mathfrak{A}}^{2}$ $\hat{\mathfrak{A}}^{2}$ $\hat{\mathfrak{A}$

There *are six* different categories of people who have lifetime layperson's vows: laypeople who are *keeping* only *one* component, those who are keeping *a couple* of them, those who are *keeping most* of them, those who are *keeping all* of them, those who are *keeping celibacy*, and lastly those called "refuge laypeople" who are keeping only a vow of refuge.

These six categories of laypeople's vows consist respectively of agreeing to the six things which are listed after them in the root text. The first category of laypeople have agreed to give up killing humans or any other one of the root four. The second category of laypeople have given up two of the root four, and the third have given up three of them. The fourth category of laypeople are those who have agreed to give up breaking all five of the basic rules, which includes not committing adultery. The fifth category consists of those who have additionally agreed to give up all sexual activity. The sixth kind of laypeople have agreed to keep just the lay vow of going for refuge to the Three Jewels. Everyone with lifetime layperson's vows must give up alcohol and keep the advices on taking refuge.

 ત્यो'यश्चेरु, यो' श्चें श्रे, या यस्तु, या ये' य्यो या या न म्यू, या या न यो कि ये यह का य यह का यह यह का यह क

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The Commentary on the Eight Lifetime Layperson's Vows and the Jewel of the True Thought of the Able Ones mention another kind of lifetime layperson called a "gomi" layperson. The word gomi means "venerable"; according to Tsonawa, this is a vow which is recognized in the system of the Majority School, and refers to those who wear the robes of an ordained or "venerable" person, and who take the one-day vows every day for as long as they live. In this text our precious Lord does not mention this vow explicitly, probably because it is not included in the system of the Entirist School. The reverend Lobsang Palden Yeshe says that the great translator Gu mentions a kind of "higher" layperson. This should be investigated at some future time.

Novice Vows

The third section on the vows of a novice will have two points: an identification of the novice vows, and a description of the novice's rules.

₹اح۲: کَنْ کَمَا

The identification of the novice vow is expressed in these lines:

The novice vow is giving up ten: The root four and the secondary six.

The novice vow is agreeing *to give up*, for as long as you live, *ten* different things to be abandoned: *the root four* of killing and the rest, *and the secondary six* of dancing and so on. The vow must be taken with a motivation of renunciation, in the presence of a preceptor, a ceremonial assistant, and a quorum of ordained people.

The description of the novice vows is given in the following verse:

The secondary come to six, by dividing into two Dancing and so on, and ornamentation and such, and then adding handling money to make three. To arrive at the thirteen things to give up On these then add the three failures: Not making supplications to your preceptor, Giving up the appearance of a layperson, And taking on the appearance of the ordained.

અત અગ્વા સુગા અડ્ડ મ્ડ મેલે વે મેં આવે દેવા ગાલુ માડુ એ ગાય અપ માસ્ટ મેં સુવા ગાય છે. ગ્રી સુવય સુચા અડ્ડ મેં મેં સુવા મેં સુ ગા અગ્રી તે મેં સુવા માં સુવા મેં સુવા મેં સુવા મેં સુવા મું સુવા મેં સુવા મું સુવા મેં સુવા મું સુવા મું સુવા મું સુવા મેં સુવા મું સુવા મું સુવા મું સુવા મું સુવા મું સુવા મેં સુવા મું સુવા મે સુવા મું સુવ સુવા મું સુવા મુ સુવા મું સુવા મુ સુવા સુવા મું સુવ સુવા સુવા સુવા મું સ

The secondary vows *come to six*, in the following way. We first *divide into two* the vow of giving up *dancing and so on, and ornamentation and such*. *Then* we *add* the rule about not *handling money*, and this *makes three*. If on top of these we add the three that concern drinking alcohol, eating food after noon, and using high valuable seats, the total is six.

By adding these to the root four that prohibit killing, stealing, sexual activity, and lying, we come to ten main things which must be given up. (Je Tsongkapa does not explicitly mention certain of the secondary six, nor the root four, at this point in his text because he already covered them in the section on the one-day vow.)

Over and above *these* ten we *add the three failures* of *not making supplications to your preceptor,* not *giving up the appearance of a layperson, and* not *taking on the appearance of the ordained; we thus arrive at* a total of *thirteen.* The vow of a novice is *to give up* these thirteen, which are known as "transgressions of the vow taken directly from the preceptor."

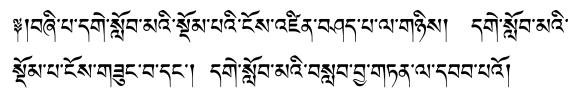
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Reading Five: A General Description of the Vows, Part Two

The following selection consists of the third major section of *Daymaker (Nyinbyed)*, composed by Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851) as a commentary to the *Essence of the Ocean of Discipline ('Dul-ba rgya-mtso'i snying-po)*, a summary of the *vinaya* teachings by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).

Please note that the portions of the English translation marked with (...) deal with specific vows and have been deleted, since this cannot be taught to persons without the proper ordination.

The Vows of an Intermediate Nun



The identification of the vows of an intermediate nun vow has two points: an identification of the intermediate nun's vows, and an description of the rules for intermediate nuns.

¥ام۲۲۰۲۰۹۱

The identification of these vows is given in the following lines of the root text:

ได้จารุการู้รากถ้ารู้ฉานสา ารทิ ผู้รามาพิ ผู้มามาพิสา

The intermediate nun's vows consist Of giving up the basic six parts As well as the ancillary six, Subsequent to receiving the novice vow.

The vows of an intermediate nun are taken *subsequent to receiving* a pure form of the female *novice vows* explained earlier. They must be taken with a motivation of renunciation, from a female preceptor and a female master of ceremony before a quorum of the ordained.

These *intermediate nun's vows consist of* agreeing to *give up* twelve things for the length of two years. Here first are *six basic*—that is, elemental—*parts* or actions to give up, such as walking down a street without a proper companion. Next are the *six ancillary* or incidental *parts*, such as taking possession of money.

¥।याहेरूप्य है।

The description of the vows is expressed in these lines:

ાગરુગાસુવ્યસર્ડુવર્ગ્નેસેટી શ્રિ.મુંતુત્વર્સ્યસ્વામીત્વામુદ્યા

।শ'ৰী'নৰ্স্য'নম'মী'ন্ত্ৰ'ন। |ইশ'মন্থৰ'ৰ্ক্তম'ৰী'ৰ্বম'ৰ্ন্ডুন্স'ৰ্য্যুদ'। (. . .)

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ાક્ષુેશ્વાયાવાર્યત્રે સેવાસાગ્રી ક્ષુેશ્વાયાન્દ્રવાસાગ્રી

By keeping the following rules, one **gives up the primary six** things that work against the vows of an intermediate nun:

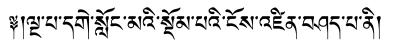
(. . .)

By keeping the following rules, one *gives up the ancillary six* things that work against the vows of an intermediate nun:

(. . .)

Most of the text of the verses at this point can be found in the *Assortment of Scripture* and its commentary. A few apparent discrepancies in the wording can probably be attributed to differences in the translation from Sanskrit.

Vows of a Full Nun



The fifth section concerns the identification of the vows of a full nun. The root text on this point reads as follows:

The vows of a full nun consist of giving up Three hundred and sixty-four different things: The eight defeats and twenty remainders, Thirty-three downfalls of release, A hundred and eighty simple downfalls, Eleven deeds for individual confession, And a hundred and twelve offenses.

The vows of a full nun consist of giving up three hundred and sixty-four different things, or downfalls. These downfalls are divided into the following groups:

(. . .)

One agrees to *give up* the above downfalls, and pledges *to* adhere to this code of behavior for the length of one's entire life. This is done through a ceremony involving four different requests, in the presence of a [female] preceptor, a [female] master of ceremony, and two groups of the ordained, each constituting the necessary quorum. One takes the vows out of a motivation of renunciation.

Vows of a Full Monk



The sixth section is an identification of the vows of a full monk, and is presented in the following lines:

The vows of a full monk consist of giving up Two hundred and fifty-three different things: The sum of four defeats and thirteen remainders, Thirty downfalls of release, Ninety different simple downfalls, Four deeds for individual confession, And a hundred and twelve offenses.

The vows of a full monk are or consist of giving up two hundred and fifty-three different things, or observing a code of this many rules. The things that you give up consist of *the sum* total of the following groups:

(. . .)

One agrees to *give up* the above downfalls, and pledges *to* adhere to this code of behavior for the length of one's entire life. This is done through a full ordination ceremony of current times which is complete and without fault, performed in the presence of a preceptor, a master of ceremony, and a quorum of the ordained. One takes the vows out of a motivation of renunciation.

Here finally is a literal explanation of the names of the different offenses and downfalls. The word "root" is used to describe those ultimate wrong actions which function to damage one's vows. "Defeats" are so named because, in committing them, one has been defeated by the enemy; that is, by mental afflictions and the things they involve. "Remainders" take their name from the fact that, if you perform one of them, there is nonetheless the slightest bit of a vow remaining that can be restored.

"Downfalls of release" are spoken of this way because, in order to repair them, one must first release some object. "Downfalls" are so called because they make a person who commits them fall down into the lower births. "Deeds for individual confession" are types of wrong actions that must be confessed by each full monk individually first. "Offenses" or bad deeds are so called because one has done something which was not good. "Obstacles" take their name from the fact that they present an obstacle to the further development of one's good qualities.

"Non-virtues" [literally "deeds that we are threatened against"] derive their name from the fact that they give unpleasant consequences. "Wrong deeds" [literally "unspeakable acts"] are so called because they are actions which in the presence of holy beings we would feel unable to admit we had done.

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Reading Six: Taking and Keeping the Vows

The following selection consists of the last major section of *Daymaker (Nyin-byed)*, composed by Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851) as a commentary to the *Essence of the Ocean of Discipline ('Dul-ba rgya-mtso'i snying-po)*, a summary of the *vinaya* teachings by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).

WHO CAN TAKE THE VOWS

¥ๅาตินพัฒราฏิชัญนาฏิเกล้าริสามุๆานลา

The fourth category is an explanation of the kinds of people who can take the individual freedom vows.

The root text at this point says:

The eight types of individual freedom Can be taken by males or females On three continents of Dzambu and the rest, But not on Terrible Sound. Not by the impotent, Neuters, hermaphrodites, or the like.

Those eight types of individual freedom vows which I explained above can be taken by people, male or female, who live on the three continents of Dzambu, Greatbody and Cattleusers, but not by those who live on the northern continent of Terrible Sound, or on one of the two subcontinents related to this continent. The vows cannot be taken by the following types of beings:

those who are *impotent* in the sense of being unable to have sexual relations;

neuters, which includes five kinds of "male" neuters (neuters from birth, half-month neuters, contact neuters, jealousy neuters, and neuters by castration)¹ and five kinds of "female" neuters (hermaphroditic neuters,

¹ These five types are explained as follows: A "neuter from birth" is someone who from birth was from birth neither a man nor a woman. A "half-month neuter" is someone who turns into a woman for half the month, and into a man for the other half of the month. A "contact neuter" is someone whose sexual organ comes out only when embraced by another. A "jealousy neuter" is someone whose sexual organ comes out only when seeing others in sexual contact, or by seeing another's sexual organ and being jealous of it. A "neuter by castration" is someone who has lost their sexual organ because

neuters by connection, neuters who are always menstruating, neuters who never menstruate, and infertile neuters);²

as well as *hermaphrodites*, who possess both male and female sexual organs.

Neither can vows be taken by persons who have committed an immediate misdeed, by those who are impostors attempting to learn about the tradition for their own reasons, by persons who hold wrong views, *or* anyone *of the like*.

HOW THE VOWS ARE LOST

The fifth category covers the things that can make you lose these vows. It has two sections: the actual explanation of what makes you lose your vows, and an explanation of the beliefs of our own Buddhist schools concerning this.

The first of these has two parts of its own: an explanation of the "shared" causes which would make you lose any of the eight types of individual-freedom vows, and then an explanation of the unique causes which would make you lose certain ones of these vows.

¥ام۲-۲٬۳۶۱

The first of the two is covered in the following lines of the root text:

of illness, or because it was cut off.

² These five types of "female" neuters are explained as follows. An "hermaphroditic neuter" is a predominately female hermaphrodite with both male and female sexual organs. A "neuter by connection" is a woman suffering from a disease where the sexual organ and anus are interconnected. A "neuter who is always menstruating" refers to a woman who is constantly menstruating. A "neuter who never menstruates" is a woman who is not menstruating at all. An "infertile neuter" is a woman who has the female sexual organ but not the female sexual energy.

The causes for losing your vows are two. Those shared are returning, dying and moving, Both organs appearing, changing three times, And cutting the very root of virtue.

The *two causes for losing your vows are* the shared causes for losing any of the eight types of individual freedom vows, and the unique causes for losing certain ones of them. The *shared causes* for losing any of the vows are the following:

returning your vows by pronouncing the words of the ritual for returning them, where you say "I give back my vows..." and so on in the presence of a fully-ordained monk or the like;

dying and moving on to your next birth;

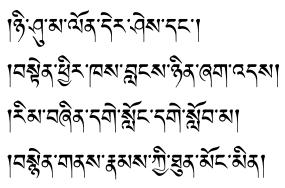
having *both* male and female sexual *organs appear* on you simultaneously;

changing sexes three times;

or cutting the very root of your virtue by holding wrong views.

¥।याहेरूप्य दे।

The unique causes for losing certain ones of the vows are explained in these lines:



Finding out that you're not twenty, Agreeing to have, and the end of a day; These the respective unique for full monks And nuns, intermediate nuns, and one-day.

The unique causes for losing the vows of a fully-ordained monk, an intermediate nun, and a one-day vow are, respectively, the following three:

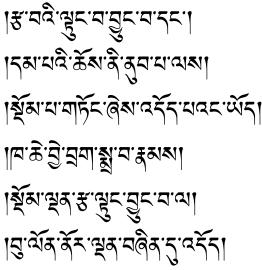
not being twenty years old when you took full monk's vows, but thinking you were as you did, and then later *finding out that* you weren't twenty, while *you're* still *not twenty* (here the time spent in the womb is included in the twenty);

agreeing to have sex with a man;

and *the ending of a day* (that is, one 24-hour period), which is the amount of time that you committed to keep the vow.

¥ मिरिश्रायाने याम्म रे हे ये महिमाय के कि क

The second section, an explanation of the beliefs of the our own Buddhist school concerning how the vows are lost, is expressed in the following lines of the root text:



Some assert that you lose your vows If a root downfall occurs or if The holy teachings decline. The Kashmiri Detailists say that when A person with vows has a root downfall, He's like someone wealthy with a debt.

Those of the Sutrist school of Buddhism, the one section of the Detailist school known as "Under the Sun," and some other Buddhist groups as well *assert that* if any one of the four *root downfalls occurs, you lose your vows*.

Some others, including the "Red-Robed Ones" (one section of the eighteen in the Listener school) *assert that you lose your vows if the holy teachings* of the Buddha *decline* in the world.

Those of *the Kashmiri* section of the *Detailists* though don't agree that committing a root downfall causes you to lose your vows. They *say that when a person* like a fully-ordained monk *with* proper individual-freedom *vows has* committed *one* of the *root downfalls* like killing, he is immoral from the point of view of not stopping himself from killing, but still moral in the sense of stopping himself from stealing and the like.

They say thus that *he's like someone wealthy with a debt*. From the point of view of having a debt, he is poor, but from the point of view of having wealth, he is rich. The Asanga brothers, among others, do not agree that you lose your vows if the holy teachings of the Buddha happen to decline in the world. Their position is that even if the Buddhist teachings were to do so, those who did not already have vows could not get new ones, but those who did already had vows would not lose them.

BENEFITS OF KEEPING YOUR VOWS

র্ম্রুম'শ

The sixth category concerns the benefits you get from keeping the individual vows. This will be explained in two sections: the actual explanation of the benefits of keeping the vows of individual freedom, and some encouragement to keep the vows which possess these benefits.

The first of these two is expressed in the following verse of the root text:

It is stated that, from keeping these vows, One attains the temporal result of birth As a pleasure being or human; and as An ultimate result three enlightenments.

બેમાર્ચા નાર્ગ્ય ગયું છે. મુંગ્રે સુંગ્રે સું યવે સુર રે લેચ પર્વો

Many times, throughout all of the open and secret teachings of the Buddha and their commentaries, *it is stated that* if one *keeps* properly *the* eight types of individual freedom *vows* which I have just described, then *he or she attains the temporal result* of a higher birth as *a pleasure being or human*, as well as *the ultimate result* of "definite good"—which refers to one of the *three* kinds of *enlightenment:* the enlightenment of the listener, the enlightenment of the Self-Made Buddhas, and the unsurpassable state of total Enlightenment.

In particular, the text known as *Entering the Middle Way* states: There's no other cause than the ethical life for the definite good, And higher rebirths, of ordinary beings, and those born from speech, And those individuals who are committed to self-made Buddhahood, And finally those who are the princes of the victorious Buddhas.

।বাদ্ধিম'ম'ম।

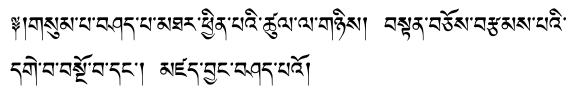
The encouragement on keeping the vows that have these benefits is expressed in the root text with the lines that follow next:

Therefore those of you willing to make effort Should in respect and always strive to keep them.

๗๖ิฆานราฏฆาสุฆาฉุธุราวฐราวรัฐราวิการุฐราธราฏส์ ดิฆานส์ไ

The benefits thus have been described as limitless; *therefore*, for this reason, *those of you who are willing to make an effort* (which means, those of you who wish to give some meaning to the spiritual leisures and fortunes you've found) *should* put forth two kinds of effort where you *always strive*, *and strive with* feelings of *respect*, *to keep these* vows: cherish them as you do your own life, and then give it all your strength.

THE CONCLUSION



The conclusion of my commentary covers two points: the dedication of the merit of composing the root text, and finally the colophon.

THE DEDICATION OF MERIT

¥155:दें'के।

In the root text the dedication is found in the following pair of lines:

। দুমী'দীম'ন্ধী'মম'ণ্ড্রেমান্তর'র রমমা हिमाफु. र्कट रूग हेरि त्या मान रूग हेमा ।

By the virtue of what I've just done may every Living creature abide forever in pure activity.

Here Je Tsongkapa dedicates whatever amount of virtue he may have gained by composing this treatise, the one known as the *Essence of the Ocean of Discipline*. He dedicates *this virtue* to *every living creature*, to a number of beings as infinite as the extent of space itself:

From this moment on, *always, may every living creature* achieve a life of leisure and opportunity. May they then enter the door of the Buddha's teachings, and *abide in* the faultless morality of *pure activity*. And may they thus attain, with speed, the state of the Omniscient Victors!

THE COLOPHON

¥।শান্ত<mark>ী</mark>ষ্ঠামান্বী

The colophon to Je Tsongkapa's text reads as follows:

This completes the *Briefer Essence of the Ocean of Discipline,* a presentation of the vows of individual freedom by that master of poetics, the glorious Tsongkapa of the East, otherwise known as Lobsang Drakpa, who took his birth in the very farthest reaches of the Land of Snow.

Here I shall give a detailed explanation of the colophon. In the Tibetan text, the word *che* (the expression *"this completes"* in English) is used to indicate the end of the body of the text. The literal meaning of the phrase *"vows of individual freedom"* has already been covered above.

This has been *a presentation:* a treatise which presents in full—either directly or indirectly, as the subject may require—how one attains these vows if they have yet to be attained; how one keeps them from being damaged in the case that they have already been attained; and how one restores them should they happen to be damaged. It is an eloquent and unprecedented study of the subject, and it has a very special name.

The word "discipline" in the title of this text has a particular meaning. The subject matter of the section of the canon which treats discipline is that morality which involves giving up the seven actions, along with what is associated with them. This morality "disciplines" or tames the mental afflictions, and also acts to "discipline" or control the senses. This then is why the subject is known as "discipline."

This same section of the canon, the section on discipline, has moreover been described as follows in the *Sutra on the Vows of Individual Freedom*:

That thing called individual freedom Is the essence and heart which allows the entire Bottomless, shoreless snow-water lake Of the Buddha's discipline to remain.

The depth and breath of the great ocean is difficult to fathom; just so, the rules of the holy teachings on discipline—the requirements, allowances, exceptions, and so on—have also a depth and breadth which can only be grasped with difficulty. And just as the ocean is the ultimate source of all jewels, the code of discipline is the ultimate source of all the good qualities of higher births and definite good. It is for this reason that we call this text the *ocean*.

The most extraordinary, essential object within the ocean is that precious jewel which grants every wish, and in the same way the most extraordinary, essential core of the teachings on discipline consists of the vows of individual freedom. Here too in his treatise Je Tsongkapa has treated the vows as the very *essence*, purposely highlighting and explaining them.

North of the "Seat of the Diamond" [Vajrasana, the site of the Buddha's enlightenment], which is located in the Land of the Realized Ones [that is, India], lies the country known as the "Snowy Land." In the "upper" part of this

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country are the three states we call *Ngari;* in the country's center are the four provinces of *U*-*tsang,* and in the "lower" part we find the three highlands of *Dokam.*

Je Tsongkapa took his birth in the very farthest reaches of the eastern part of the *Land of Snow;* that is, in the section of the three highlands of Dokam known as the "Highlands of Tsongka," so called because the Tsongka river flows through this area.

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Reading Seven: The Ten Non-Virtues, and their Karmic Results

The following selection is taken from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path* (*Lam-rim chen-mo*), written by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).

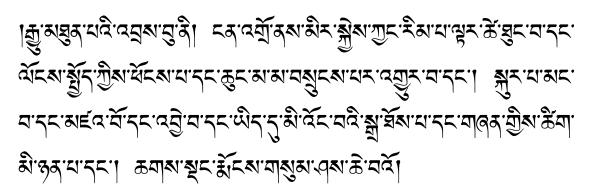
। मार्श्य सारी देवा मी उन्हरू में जा मार्श्य स्था की का क्री के मी उन्हरू में जी जा का का की का की जा के कि का क

Here is the third section, a presentation on the consequences of the various kinds of bad deeds. We proceed in three parts, beginning with what are called the "ripened" consequences.

Now each one of the ten paths of karma can itself be divided into three kinds—lesser, medium, and greater—depending on the intensity of the three poisons. The *Main Stage of Levels* states that, from the ten greater instances of killing and the rest, one is born into the hells. It says that from medium instances of each of the ten you take birth as an insatiable spirit; and from the ten lesser instances, you are born as an animal.

The *Sutra on the Ten Levels* however states the consequences of two of the kinds of instances, the lesser and the medium, in reverse of this.

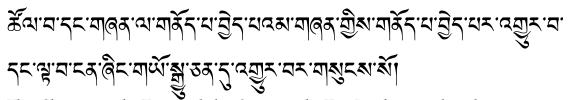
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The "consistent" consequences are as follows. Even if you do manage to escape the realms of misery and take birth as a human, the following respective results occur to you:

- 1) Your life is short.
- 2) You don't have enough to live on.
- 3) You have problems keeping your partner from others.
- 4) People don't believe what you say, even when you're telling the truth.
- 5) You lose friends easily.
- 6) You hear things as bad sounds.
- 7) No one listens to you.
- 8) Your personality is dominated by desire.
- 9) Your personality is dominated by anger.
- 10) Your personality is dominated by stupidity.

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The *Chapter on the True* and the *Sutra on the Ten Levels* state that there are two such consequences for each of the ones given here; even if you do manage to take birth as a human,

1) Your life is short, and you get sick easily.

2) You don't have enough to live on, and what you do have is all just common property with others.

3) The people who work around you are "inconsistent," which here means unreliable, and you find yourself having a lot of competition for your partner.

4) No one believes what you say, even when you are speaking the truth, and others are always deceiving you.

5) The people around you are always fighting against one another, and have an undesirable character.

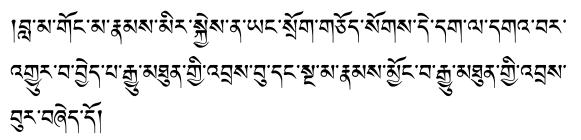
6) You hear many unpleasant things, and when others talk to you it always seems to you as if they want to start a fight.

7) No one respects what you say—no one thinks that what you say has any particular value, and you are afflicted with a lack of confidence.

8) Your personality is dominated by desire, and you are never satisfied with what you have.

9) You are always finding yourself without help, or never find the help you need; and you are always hurting others, or always being hurt by others.

10) You become a person who keeps harmful views, or a deceitful person.



Great lamas of the past have expressed the position that the "consistent" consequence is where, even if you do manage to take birth as a human, you enjoy killing things, and so on. They say then that experiencing the various results just listed is a "ripened" consequence [the second *rgyu mthun* here is likely a text error for *rnam smin;* this is the corrected reading].

Next is what we call the "environmental" or "dominant" consequence. Here for example the consequence of killing expresses itself in the outer world around you. Food, drink, medicine, the crops in the fields, and other such things have very little power; they are always inferior; they have little nutrition or potency; they are hard to digest, and they cause disease in you. Because of this the majority of the living beings around you die before reaching the end of a full life.

Because you have stolen, then the crops are few and far between; the crops have no power to remove hunger; they spoil; they never come up; dry spells stay on too long; it rains too much; the crops dry up, or die off.

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Because you have done wrong sex, you live in a place where there is urine and feces all around, and mud and dirt and filth, and everything stinks, and everywhere seems unpleasant and distasteful.

Course IX: The Ethical Life Reading Seven

Because you have lied, you live in a world where, when you undertake farming or some work in cooperation with other people, in the end the work fails to prosper, and the people can't work well together, and for the most part everyone is cheating one another, and is afraid, and where there are many things to be afraid of.

Because you have split people up with your talk, the very ground in the place you live is all uneven, covered with crags and gullies, full of highs and lows, so that you can travel only with difficulty, and where you are always afraid, and there are many things to be afraid of.

Because you have spoken harsh words, the ground where you live is covered with obstacles like the trunks of fallen trees, and thorns, and stones, and clods of dirt, and lots of sharp broken pieces of glass; it's rough, and dreary; no streams, or lakes, or springs of water; the whole earth is parched, poisoned with salt and borax, burning hot, useless, threatening; a place where there are many things to fear.

Because you have talked meaninglessly, fruits refuse to grow on the trees, or they start to grow at the wrong times, never at the right times, and seem ripe when they're still not ripe, or their roots are frail, or they can't stay long; there are no places to take your leisure, no parks, no glades, no pools of cool water, and many things around to make you afraid.

Because you have coveted what others have, then each and every good thing you ever manage to find starts to get worse, and less and less, never more, each one of them, with the passing of each of the four season, and in every month, and even day by day.

Because you have wished bad things on others, you live in a world of chaos, where diseases spread, and evil is everywhere, and plague, and conflict, and fear from the armies of other nations; where there are many lions or leopards or other dangerous animals; where there are everywhere venomous snakes or scorpions or poison biting worms; surrounded by harmful spirits, and thieves or muggers, and the like.

Because you have held wrong views, then you live in a world where the single highest source of happiness is steadily disappearing from the earth; a world where people think that things that are unclean and things that are suffering are actually nice, and happy; a world where there is no place to go, no one to help, nothing to protect you.

The Asian Classics Institute Course IX: The Ethical Life

Reading Eight: Introduction to the Steps of the Path

The following reading consists of the first part of the *Song of My Spiritual Life* (*Nyam mgur*) of Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419). This text is also known as *The Short Book on the Steps of the Path (Lam rim bsdus don)*. Accompanying the verses of Je Tsongkapa's root text is a commentary called *Illumination of the Essence* (*Snying po mdor bsdus gsal ba*), composed by Choney Lama Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748).

JE TSONGKAPA SONG OF MY SPIRITUAL LIFE The Short Book on the Steps of the Path

ন'নপ্তনাঝ'র্মা

Herein is contained the Brief Illumination of the Essence, a word-by-word commentary on the Short Book on the Steps of the Path.

🔌 વિંચેં શું સ દે ગ્યું દે ખો

I bow down to Sumatikirti.

।ସୃଦ୍ୟାଧ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ଥିମ ଅନ୍ତି ସିଥି ପୁଦ୍ୟା ଅନ୍ଥି ଅନ୍ତି ଅନେ ଅନ୍ଥି। । ସାତ୍ତର ଅନ୍ତର ଅନ୍ତି ସେ ଅନ୍ତର ଅନ୍ତ । ସାତ୍ତର ଅନ୍ତର ଅନ

I bow down to the sun, the teacher, the Lord of the Able, The one and only friend of all fortunate lotus flowers, Whose holy activities rise with glory to benefit others Pulled by the swift horse of His exalted bodhichitta!

With reverence I bow down at the feet of my holy Lama, Who analyzes and excellently comments upon the profound meanings Which other great *minds* find difficult to fathom. Such supremely *good* activities cause you to shine with *fame*!

I shall illuminate the true intent of the *Short Steps of the Path*, That very quintessence of your excellent explanations Which combines in one, each and every crucial point Of that known as the "steps of the path to enlightenment."

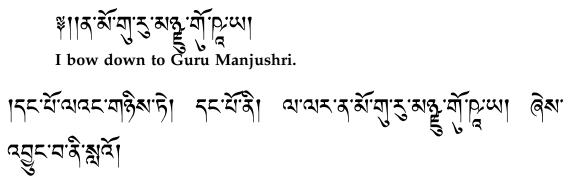
Course IX: The Ethical Life Reading Eight

Here I am going to explain the *Song of My Spiritual Life*, also known as the *Short Book on the Steps of the Path*, composed by your and my Lama, the King of the Dharma, the great Tsongkapa. My explanation will be in three divisions: first the preliminaries of the offering of praise and the other preparatory steps, then the meaning of the actual body of the text, and lastly some concluding details.

THE PRELIMINARIES

The preliminary division of my text has two parts of its own: the offering of praise, and an identification of that which is to be to be explained.

OFFERING OF PRAISE



The offering of praise is in two sections. First is the line "I bow down to Guru Manjushri," which appears in some editions of the text. Its meaning is easy to understand.

Prostration to the Lord of the Able Ones



The second section of the offering of praise is contained in five points. The first is an obeisance to the Lord of the Able Ones which is expressed in the

first four lines of the root text which begins "To His exalted body born from perfect complete goodness and millions of virtues."

To His Exalted body born from perfect complete goodness and millions of virtues,

To His exalted speech which fulfills the hopes of infinite living beings,

To His exalted mind which sees each and every knowable thing just as it is,

To the Prince of the Shakyas, with my head I bow down.

The general good qualities of the Buddha are the three of His knowledge, love, and power; and also those things which He has realized and those which He has abandoned. However, if we were to restrict ourselves to the good qualities of *His exalted body* alone, it is His major and minor marks which set Him apart. There are certain causes which produce these great qualities—they are *born from millions of* instances of *goodness and virtue*. They are not produced by merely some isolated occasions of this goodness and virtue, but rather by their *perfect completion*, which is subsumed under the accumulations of merit and wisdom.

Here the word "million" does not necessarily refer specifically to the exact number one million, but is used rather to express a great quantity. If you are interested in the exact kinds of causes which go into each major and minor mark, that is clarified in *The String of Precious Jewels*. Such works as the *Mother Sutras*, as well as the *Ornament of Realizations*, go through their each and every cause individually.

The good quality of *His exalted speech* could be explained with regards to its nature, but let us here consider it from the point of view of its result. The good quality or function of the speech of the One Thus Gone is acting to *fulfill* both the temporal and ultimate *hopes of living beings* who are *infinite* in number. By what means does it fulfill their hopes? It benefits them by teaching them those teachings which resolve the doubts at every juncture in their life, and by leading them toward the higher realms and definite good.

As for the nature of the particular good qualities of *His exalted mind*, it *sees* directly *each and every knowable thing just as it is*—all of them, the way they are, as many as they may be.

There is a way in which we may bow down to *the Prince of the Shakya* clan, to Shakyamuni, who possesses these exalted qualities of body, speech, and mind. To Him, the able one of the Shakyas, we may bow down with the very highest of our limbs, making prostrations with our head.

Prostration to Loving One and Gentle Voice

The second point is contained within these lines of the root text:

I bow down to the Undefeatable, and to Gentle Voice,

Those supreme sons of our Teacher, who is without rival. Having taken on the load of all the Victorious One's activity,

They act by emanating themselves In countless paradises.

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Having taken on—that is, accepted—the load of all the activity of the Victorious One's exalted body, speech and mind, the Undefeatable Loving One and Gentle Voice are putting on a show. Not only on this planet but in countless Buddha paradises they are acting out their parts by emanating themselves as bodhisattvas and other types of beings. Je Tsongkapa bows down to those two dharma sons of our unrivaled Teacher, the two who are supreme among all bodhisattvas.

The way in which they take on the load of His activity is as follows. Both Loving One and Gentle Voice cause the holy teachings of the Able One in general, and more specifically, the lineage of widespread activities and the lineage of profound view to remain and flourish in the world.

Prostration to Nagarjuna and Asanga

The third point of the offering of praise is expressed in the following verse:

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To those jewels of our Southern Continent who commented just as was meant

Upon the *Mother of the Victors* which is so very difficult to fathom.

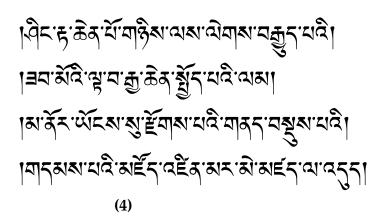
To those who are known throughout all of the three realms

To Nagarjuna and Asanga at their feet I bow down.

। यासुस्र भाषि भिक्ष मुन्द भया भरत्त गाय मार्श्व मात्र विष्ठे हिंदा सुया पर्व क्या थे। विष्ठ भाषा कुया मदी यासुदा र मार्श्व न्द्र निहान भर्मा भिक्ष मुन्द भया भरते मिंद्र या भाषित्र मुन्द भ्या स्वर्थ भ्या म देवी दि सा मार्ग्व क्या मदी भ्या मुर्थ भ्या मुद्र मा मिंद्र मुन्द मिंद्र मा मिंद्र में मिंद्र मा मिंद्र मिंद्र देवी द सा मार्ग्व क्या मिर्ग्व मिंद्र मिंद्र क्वा मिंद्र मा मिंद्र मिं मिंद्र मिं मिंद्र मिं मिंद्र मिंद मिंद मिंद्र मिंद्र मिंद्र मिंद् Here the prostration is made in general to the highest form of speech—that of the Victorious Buddhas—and more particularly *to* the savior *Nagarjuna and* the realized being *Asanga*. These two are here named to represent all of those *who commented just as* it *was meant* to be *upon* the true intent of those sutras which are *so very difficult to fathom;* that is, to grasp. Here we are referring to the *Mother of the Victors* in all its three forms—extensive, middle length, and brief. *These* two masters, *who are known throughout all the three realms*—below the earth, upon the earth, and above the earth— have become like the *jewels of our Southern Continent*. The "I" referred to here in the text, the one who is *bowing down at their feet*, is the glorious Lobsang Drakpa.

Prostration to Atisha

These lines contain the fourth point of the offering of praise:



I bow down to the Maker of Light, the one who holds the treasury of instructions

Which contain without mistake, the totality of all the important points—

Those of the path of profound view, and those of widespread activity—

Which came down to him so perfectly through the lineage of the two great innovators.

Here Je Tsongkapa *bows down* to Atisha, the glorious *Maker of Light*. He is *the one who holds the treasury of instructions which contain* in their entirety *without mistake the totality of all the important points of the* steps of the *path of* the teachings on *profound view and widespread activity*. These instructions *came down to him perfectly through the lineage* which began with *the two great innovators*, Nagarjuna and Asanga. By relying on the Lama Serlingpa, the Great Lord Atisha heard those teachings which came down through the lineage of Loving One and Asanga, and by relying on Vidyakokila he heard in their entirety the teachings from the lineage of Gentle Voice and Nagarjuna. He then composed commentaries combining together these two great currents of teachings.

Prostration to all Spiritual Guides

The last point of the offering of praise in contained within this verse of the root text:

(5)

I bow down with deep respect to all Spiritual Guides.

Inspired by their love they act with skillful means in order to make clear

The supreme entry point for those fortunate ones who are travelling to freedom—

That eye which can see all the myriad forms of the Buddha's supreme speech.

This very teaching on the steps of the path for people of the three capacities is like an *eye* with *which* you *can see all the myriad forms of the Buddha's supreme speech,* and not only certain parts of it. It is also the supreme entry point and path which allows *fortunate disciples* to *travel to freedom*. Here our Lord *bows down to all* the *Spiritual Guides* who *inspired* and driven *by their* exalted thoughts of *love* are *acting with skillful means in order to make* this teaching *clear* to their disciples. He bows down not only in his words, but *with deep* thoughts of *respect*.

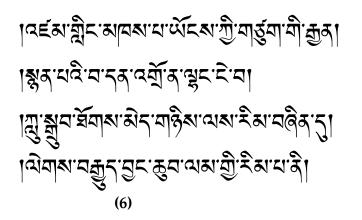
Some people explain that the words "that eye which can see" refer to the Spiritual Guide, but Je Tsongkapa's true intention was that the "eye" refer to the teaching on the steps itself. This fact is made clear towards the ends of his *Great Book on the Steps of the Path.*

IDENTIFICATION OF WHAT IS GOING TO BE EXPLAINED

Now I shall identify that which is actually going to be explained in three sections: details of the lineage of the teaching, its special features, and its necessity.

Details of the Lineage

The details of the lineage are explained in this verse:



These steps of the path to enlightenment progressively came down

Through an excellent lineage from both Nagarjuna, and Asanga—

Those jewels on the crowns of all the great masters of our world—

Whose brilliance shines like a victory banner among living beings.

าสุจิพานานครายารัพานสรานาณาสมูญ กลุฐรานนิายรานรา ยราธิพา รทัศาสร์ เราะวันิ จรัสเสิรามกลายพักสามาร์สามาลิเลโ จรัสเ สิราวริราฏิ์สานวิเพศพานาพ์รพาฏิเศสู์ศาทิาสูสารูาฏิราชิรา ฟศพานวิ * क्रु त'य'र्से मार्था गात मुग्यायायायाया नियाय के प्रति यात्र यात्र यात्र के का स्ट्रा स กลุณาาาสูาสูาาาาาร์สกุลามาารุงลางลาร์ลานาาติสารูานิกุลานาากสูา ୳ୖୖଌୄୠଽୄୄ୶ୠ୲୶୶୲ୄୖୄୠୖଽୡ୲୳ୖୡଽ୩ୄ୶ଽୖୄଌୄଽ୲ୡଌଽୄ୳ଽୄୠୖୡୄ୲୲ୖ୲ୡୡ୲ୖୢ୫୕ୡ୲୳୲ୠୡ୲ୠଌୢ র্বি-শ্রীর্ম'মর্লেন'র্না

That which I shall explain is precisely those great books on the *steps of the path to enlightenment* which *came down* to us *progressively thorough an excellent lineage* beginning with *both Nagarjuna and Asanga. Of all the great masters* who ever came to *our world*, they were like the *jewels on the* tips of their *crowns*. In this land, *among living beings*, the fame of their knowledge was as *brilliant* and clear as the sun, *shining* in all directions *like a banner* of *victory*.

Implicitly in these lines Je Tsongkapa pledges to compose his treatise.

Special Features of the Teaching



There are two points to the special features of this teachings: certain special metaphors and their meanings, and its actual special features.

The special metaphors and their meanings are set forth in this verse of the root text:

(7)

Because it fulfills every desire of the many kinds of people,

It's like a king among lords of the precious gems of instruction.

Because it combines all together the river currents of thousands of fine scriptures,

It's like a great ocean of glorious and excellent explanation.

There are special metaphors used to describe this teaching on the steps of the path to enlightenment, which was passed down to us in the lineage just described. *Because it fulfills every desire of the many kinds of people* who seek

freedom, *it is like a king among* the *lords of all the precious gems of instruction*—just like that special jewel which grants your every wish. It can fulfill your wishes because if you practice its true meaning, you will achieve higher births and definite good.

Because this teaching *combines all together the river currents of* the fine explanations found in the *thousands* of *fine scriptures* of the greater and lesser ways, *it is like a great ocean of glorious*—that is, perfect—*and excellent explanation.* It brings them all together not by including each and every word of the scriptures, but rather by incorporating the meanings of all their subject matter. The expression "thousands of scriptures" is used here to indicate a great number of scriptures, and does not necessarily refer to exactly one thousand scriptures.

The actual special features of the teachings are indicated here in the root text:

ารุสานเสพพ.จราวภาพ.พรารัญพ.น.ระ. สูญารณิรส์ระพารารริเลสาริรายาระา (8)

You'll realize that all the Buddha's teachings totally lack inconsistency,

And His highest of speech will strike you as personal advice.

You will easily find the true intent of the Victorious Buddhas,

And be protected from falling into the chasm of the great mistake.

मिश्रिस्तान्ते। नस्त्रनामात्रस्र प्रतामान्त्रेन्द्रेग्रास्त्र न्द्रेन्द्र्यान्त्र्यं मिल्न्त्रं स्त्रेन्त्र्यं मिल्न्त्रं ୳୶ୖଈ୕୶ୄୠ୕୶ୖଽୄୢଈୖୣ୵ୖୖୖୖୖ୶୲୕୕୲ୄୠୢ୕୵୶୕୳୕୲ଽ୶୶୕୰୕୵ୖ୶୶୲ୄୗୖ୲ୖ୰ୖୠ୲ୠୖ୲୶ୠୖୢୖ୷୲ୖୄୖୢ୰୷୲ୖୖୖୖୖୖ୰ୖ୵୲ ૡૹ[ૣ]ૡૹ૾ઽૻૡૢૼૢૻઌૡ૽૿ૺૻૹૻઌૢ૽ૢ૾ૼૡૻઽૢૻઌ૽ૼૼૻૻૼઌઽૻૡૹૢૻૢઽૻઌૹૻૡૢૺૻઌૹૣૡૻૡૻૹ૱ૹ૱૱ૡઌૺૡૻૻ૽૱ য়૿૽૽ૼૼૼૼ૱ઌૹૻૻૹૡ૱ૡ૽૾ૺૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૻઌૻ૱ૼૡૻ૿ૼ૱ૻઌૡ૽૾ઌ૽ૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼઌૻૻ૱ૹૹૻૻૡ૽ૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૡૻ૾૾૾ૺૼૻૻ૱ૡૻ૾ૼ૱ૻૡૻ૾ૼ૱ૻૡ૾ૻ૱ <u>ઽઽૻ૱ૹૢ૱ૡ૱ૻઌૡૺ૱ૻઌૡ૾ૺ૱ૻૡૻૢ૾૱ૡૢૼૡૻૡ૱ૡ૽ૼૡ૽ૺૡૢઌૻૻ૽૽ૻ૱ૻૻૡૻૢ૱ૻૡ૱ૻ૱૱</u> ቛቚቚ[੶]ፚጟ[੶]和ๅ፟ቚቚ[੶]՟ጟਗ਼[੶]ਸ਼<mark></mark>ๅ՟ຆ໖ຠ[੶]ຒຬ ૡૺૹૻૻૻઌૹٳ ઽૻૺઽૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૻૻૼૼૺ૱૱ૹૹૻૻૡૼૼૼૼૢૼૹૻૻૻઌ૽૾ૼ૾ૺૼૼૼૼૼૼૼૹૻ૾૱૱૱૱૱૱ ૡૹૻૻૹૻૺૻૺૻ૾૱ૡૻૡૼૻૺૢૼૡૢૻૡૢૻૡૻૡ૽ૻૡૡ૱૱૱ૡૡૺૡૼૡ૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱૱ યર દેવાયાયર વશુર વયાયા શુભાવવે નવેત્રાયાવને સુવા દું દેવાયાયવે છે. તે વ

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This teachings possesses four special features, or you could say four great qualities. The first is that if you rely on this teaching *you will* come to *realize that all of the Buddha's teachings* are *totally lacking* any *inconsistency*. Of all the teachings spoken by the Victorious Buddhas, however many there may be, some of them teach the principal paths and others teach that which branches off from them. Once you know this, you will come to understand that they are all either direct or indirect factors in reaching enlightenment.

You will not have the wrong view which considers the open and secret teachings of the Buddha—those highest of all words—and the classical commentaries which comment upon their true intent to be mere explanations. You will not think that you have to look somewhere other than in the content of these books for something to use for your personal practice. Rather you will come to see that the entire subject matter of the Buddha's supreme speech along with its classical commentaries is perfectly in keeping with the progressive structure through which you do your actual practice. You will come to understand how it is that every step from taking yourself to a Spiritual Guide all the way up to the practices of developing quietude and special vision can be put into your personal practice, either through analytical meditation or through fixation meditation.

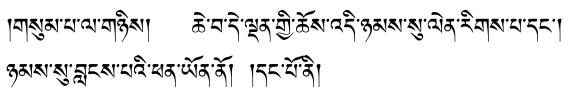
If you understand these points, then all of the *high speech* of the Buddha *will strike you as personal advice*. This is the second of the great qualities. Even though all of the teachings of the Buddha are the ultimate form of personal instruction, us spiritual beginners who haven't studied enough are unable to understand the true intent of the great scriptures on our own, nor are we able to bring them into our personal practice. Therefore we need to rely on something like this teaching on the steps of the path to enlightenment, through which our Lamas give us their personal advice on the true meaning of these original works.

This makes it *easy* for us to grasp *the true intent of the Victorious Buddhas*, and that is another great quality of the teaching on the steps. Once you *find* this true intent, you will understand that every word the Buddha ever said

contributes either directly or indirectly to our reaching enlightenment, and that there is not a single word He spoke which does not teach a method of achieving enlightenment.

In the Buddha's teachings there can appear to be some slight inconsistencies, which are required due to the needs of particular disciples, and there are also distinctions between the higher and lower teachings. But there is no difference between any of them from the point of view that they were all taught solely as methods for reaching enlightenment. If you become certain of this, you will never commit the bad deed of rejecting Buddhist teachings, and will thus *be protected from falling into the chasm of* that *great mistake*. This is the last of the four great qualities.

Necessity of the Teaching



The necessity of the teaching has two points: first why it is proper to practice this teaching which has these great qualities, and then the benefits of having put it into practice. These lines explain why it is proper to practice this teachings:

Therefore, many learned masters, both Indian and Tibetan,

Those ones with virtue's seed, took as the very basis of their personal practice The supreme instructions on the steps of the path for people of three capacities.

Would they not then steal away the heart of any discerning person?

This tradition possesses the great qualities I explained above; for this reason, *therefore, many learned Indian and Tibetan masters* who had the necessary *seeds* of *virtue took as the very basis of their personal practice the supreme instructions on the steps of the path for people of three capacities*—those of lesser, medium and the greater capacities. *Would these* instructions *not then steal away the heart of any discerning person?* Of course they would.

The benefits of having put the teachings of the path to enlightenment into practice are explained here:

In but a single session of imparting and learning this system of teaching,

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Which incorporates in brief the very essence of all the supreme speech,

You are certain to obtain in one fell swoop all the benefits

Of explaining and listening to the entire teachings; contemplate this fact.

The major scriptures describe a great number of benefits that occur when you explain or listen to any one teaching of the Buddha. Suppose you were to devote but *a single session*, much less a number of sessions, to *imparting and learning this system of teaching:* the steps of the path. Because it *incorporates in brief the very essence of all the supreme speech* belonging to both the greater and lesser ways, it is *certain* that *you* would then *in one fell swoop obtain all the benefits of explaining and listening to* all the Buddha's teachings in their *entirety.* You should therefore *contemplate this fact.* In a brief way then Je Tsongkapa is giving us personal advice about our practice.

The phrase "incorporates in brief" [$du \ du$ in the Tibetan] refers to the fact that the teachings on the steps of the path incorporate [du] the vital points of the entire supreme speech of the Buddha, and do so in an abbreviated [du] way.

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Reading Nine: Description of the Lesser Capacity

The following reading consists of the second major section of the *Song of My Spiritual Life (Nyam mgur)* of Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419). This text is also known as *The Short Book on the Steps of the Path (Lam-rim bsdus-don)*. Accompanying the verses of Je Tsongkapa's root text is a commentary called *Illumination of the Essence (Snying-po mdor-bsdus gsal-ba)*, composed by Choney Lama Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748).

THE ACTUAL BODY OF THE TEXT

माहेश्वायमाबुद मीर्ने मिन्द्र या अर्के द महेंद र्श्वमाश्वी माबुद मीष्पम लमा धेम लो देने माबुद देव दर्दे श्राण्डे द्वर्य द्वर्य के लिक द्वर्य के बुद सेंद यद्द में द्वर्य के स्वर्थ के स्वर्थ लाग क्यु मार्क्स के लागे दिन में लागहिशा हेंद्व दर्यो दर्द याविदा दिन में हो।

Those points concerning the offering of praise and so on are secondary parts of the text. Here I am going to make my explanation with reference to the actual meaning of the text. I shall do so in two parts: the way to practice the shared paths, and the way to practice the path which is not shared.

THE WAY TO PRACTICE THE SHARED PATHS

The discussion of the way to practice the shared paths is divided into two: the preliminary step followed by the main steps.

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THE PRELIMINARY STEP

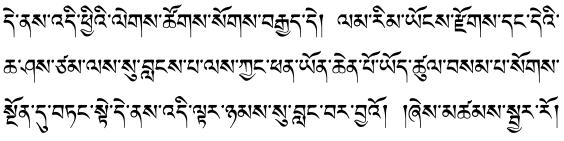
The preliminary step is covered in these lines of the root text:

After having done this, see that the very foundation Of an excellent start for all the good in this and your future lives Is the holy Spiritual Guide who teaches you the path.

Make efforts to rely on Him properly in your thoughts and in your actions; Please Him with the offering of carrying out His every instruction. And never give it up, not even at the cost of your life.

I, the master meditator, lived my life this way;

You, who seek for freedom, must try to do the same.



First you must contemplate the points above, such as the great benefits that come from putting into practice all, or even just a part of, the steps of the path. *After having done this,* says Je Tsongkapa, you should begin the actual practices which are to follow. He uses these words to lead the reader into the actual steps of the path.

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Having understood these benefits, you must then *see that the holy Spiritual Guide who teaches you the path is the very foundation* for getting you off to *an excellent start for all the good in this and your future lives*. Realize that all this depends on how you serve your Lama, and then with fierce *efforts rely* on Him *in your thoughts* by stopping that state of mind which thinks it sees faults in Him, and by developing feelings of faith towards Him as much as you can.

Rely *properly* on your Lama *in your actions* by paying Him respect with your body, praising Him with your words, and so forth. Undertake whatever you can to please your Lama in every possible way, and never undertake anything which would displease Him. Accomplish whatever He or She tells you to do.

Understanding this, you must *please* your Lama *with the offering of carrying out His every instruction.* You can *never give this up even at the cost of you life,* so what need is there to say anything about mere small incidents?

After these instructions come a special refrain, beginning with the words "I, the master meditator..." These are the actual lines as Je Tsongkapa first wrote them. Later on they were changed by someone else, and in modern prayer books we see the following:

The venerable Lamas of the past lived their lives this way; I, too, seeking freedom will try to do the same.

The meaning of the refrain is easy to understand. When it appears later on in the text, refer back to what I have said here.

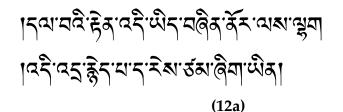
If you want to know the defining qualities of a Lama, the way in which you should rely on Him or Her, and other such details, you can learn them in the books on the steps of the path, and other such works.

THE MAIN STEPS

The section on the main steps has two points: an urging to take the essence of your leisure and fortune, and the way to take that essence.

An Urging to Take the Essence of This Life

The urging is expressed in these lines of the root text:



This body of leisure is more valuable than a jewel which grants every wish; And now is the only time that you have found such a life as this.

Having the eight leisures and the ten fortunes is essential to practicing the Buddhist teachings. Therefore, *this* very special *body* and life *of leisure* which you now have *is* even *more valuable then a* precious *jewel which grants every wish*. It is not something which you were able to find over and over again in the past. *Now is the only time* you have been able to *find a life such as this* one. These lines do not only indicate how meaningful it is to have found such a life, but also how difficult it is to find.

How is this life more valuable than a wish-fulfilling jewel? From such a jewel you can get the things you need and the things you want, but these benefits are only the temporal objects you may wish for in this life. It has been stated by the Buddha that if you use your body and mind properly, not only can you reach the higher births, you can also achieve definite good—freedom and the state of all-knowing. Therefore, this life is more valuable.

Suppose you do happen to find a body and mind with these leisures and fortunes, so difficult to attain and, once attained, so meaningful. You should not spend them meaninglessly. Make a firm pledge to yourself that you will practice the Buddhist teachings to the very best of your ability.

The Way to Take the Essence of This Life

The way to take the essence of this life has two sub-sections: how the teachings are organized into sections of the path, and the way of actually practicing them.

However many mountains of teachings were spoken by the Conquering Buddhas, all of them were meant to benefit living beings. If we look at them from the point of view of higher births and definite good, those teachings spoken by the Buddha which mainly address higher births belong to that group of teachings called either the actual path for people of lesser capacity, or the path shared with them. Those teachings which deal principally with freedom, one of the two parts of definite good, belong to the group of the teachings called either the actual path for people of medium capacity, or those sections of the path which are shared with them. Everything ever spoken by the Buddha which addresses how to achieve the state of all-knowing is included in the group of teachings for people of greater capacity.

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In this tradition we lead students along those parts of the path shared with people of lesser and medium capacity which are necessary accessories to the path of those of greater capacity. We do not however lead them along the actual paths of people of lesser and medium capacity. This is because what we call the actual path for people of lesser capacity consists of the state of mind where one aspires only for the higher births, and what we call the actual path for people of medium capacity consists of the state of mind where one aspires for freedom solely for one's own benefit. And so if we were to lead our students along these paths, there would come the problem that we would be leading them into a grave point of error in the path for people of greater capacity.

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Someone may then ask, what the difference is between these two actual paths (for people of lesser and medium capacity) and those which are shared with them. The path shared with people of lesser capacity consists of the state of mind in which one aspires to reach the higher births by means of giving up bad deeds and accomplishing good ones. The path shared with those of medium capacity consists of the state of mind in which one aspires to reach freedom by developing the true desire to be free from the entire cycle of suffering. These two attitudes are also present in the mental continua of bodhisattvas, and they must put them into practice.

Inari, મુંચ્યુ, મુંચ, મુ મુંચ, મું મુંચ, મ नुतुःरूटः શ્રેર મારે સુર રેંગ ારે અન્ ર જેર મારે મારુ લે ગરે રેંત મારે રાશે સું સુવ ગામ છે. র্বিমান্দর্মানিকামের্বা

Someone might then make the following objection. Suppose those two paths for people of lesser and medium capacity really are grave points of error for people of greater capacity. In that case, they would have to be an obstacle toward, or even in contradiction with, the path of the greater way. And then they could never constitute a method for reaching enlightenment.

But the objection is unfounded. Those two paths do constitute a grave error in the path for people of greater capacity; they prevent these people from reaching enlightenment quickly. From this point of view then, these two paths are not a method for reaching enlightenment, but it's no contradiction at all to say that they constitute a method for reaching enlightenment, in the sense that they act to gradually ripen the mental continua of listeners and "self-made" Buddhas. The point about being a grave error refers primarily to details such as the state of mind where one aspires to reach a state of blissful peace for oneself alone.



The way to practice taking the essence of this life will be explained in three divisions: the path shared with people of lesser capacity, the path shared with people of medium capacity, and the actual path for people of greater capacity.

THE PATH SHARED WITH PEOPLE OF LESSER CAPACITY



The path shared with people of lesser capacity has two parts of its own: developing the state of mind in which you look ahead to your future lives, and how to make use of those methods which can bring you happiness in your future lives.

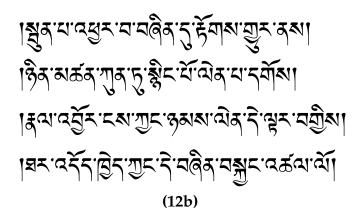
DEVELOPING THE STATE OF MIND WHICH LOOKS AHEAD TO FUTURE LIVES

Developing the state of mind which looks ahead to your future lives has two sections: the contemplation on your impermanence— the fact that you have to die, and the contemplation on the sufferings of the lower realms.

The Contemplation on Your Impermanence

The contemplation on your impermanence—the fact that you must die—is found in the following lines of the root text:

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It's difficult to find, and easily destroyed like lightning in the sky. Think this over carefully, and come to realize: All the activities of the world are chaff blown in the wind. To take the essence of this life, you must strive night and day.

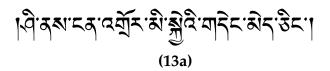
I, the master meditator, lived my life this way; You, who seek for freedom, must try to do the same.

The *difficulty* of *finding* this life can be expressed from the point of view of its causes, its very nature, and certain metaphors. And because the things which can kill you are so many, this life is *easily destroyed*. *Carefully think over* the example of how quickly a flash of *lightning* disappears from *the sky*, and how your life is just *like* that. *All the activities of the world*—such as defeating your

enemies and protecting your friends—are devoid of any real essence. Rather they are like the *chaff* or husk of grain *blown in the wind*. *Realizing* that these activities are meaningless, you must then strive night and day to take the essence of this life.

The Contemplation on the Sufferings of the Lower Realms

The contemplation on the suffering of the lower realms is expressed in the next line of the root text:



There is no guarantee that after you die you won't be born in the lower realms.

Not only is it true that you are impermanent and must die, but *after you die* you must take birth exactly where your white and black deeds throw you. Good deeds throw you into the higher realms and bring you experiences of happiness, whereas bad deeds throw you into the lower realms and bring you experiences of suffering.

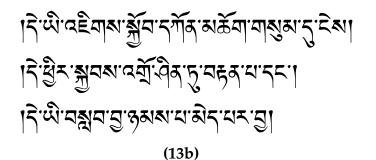
As you haven't been able to accumulate many causes to be born in the higher realms, but have rather collected many causes to be born in the lower realms, there is *no guarantee* that in your next life *you will not be born in* the hells or *the* other *lower realms*. Not only is there no guarantee that you will not be born there, in all likelihood you <u>will</u> be born there. Contemplate again and again the sufferings of the lower realms, and try to develop a very strong desire to be free from them.

METHODS FOR ACHIEVING HAPPINESS IN YOUR FUTURE LIVES

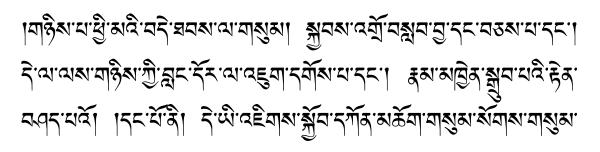
The explanation of the methods for achieving happiness in your future lives has three sections: the teachings on going for refuge, along with certain advices concerning this practice; a description of the need to act properly with regard to what you should and should not be doing relative to the two kinds of deeds; and an explanation of the foundation for achieving the state of allknowing.

Going for Refuge, and the Advices for this Practice

The next part of the root text concerns going for refuge and its advices:



And it is precisely the Three Jewels which protect you from these fears; For that reason, taking refuge should be something very firm, And you should never allow the advices concerning it to be broken.



Thus by the power of your past deeds will you fall into the lower realms. The refuge *which* can *protect you from these fears* of the lower realms *is precisely the Three Jewels*. It is said in scripture that:

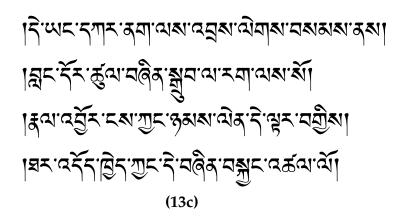
The refuge for those who desire freedom Is the Buddha, the Dharma, and Community.

The point of this quotation is that you must go for refuge, through understanding the different characteristics and good qualities of each one of the Three Jewels. The way to go for refuge is first of all to develop the state of mind which believes that the Three Jewels possess the ability to protect you from the sufferings of the lower realms and the cycle of suffering. And then, from the bottom of your heart, you must put all of your faith in them. Once you have understood that these three do have the power to protect you from your fears, you should take yourself to them for refuge, in order to gain this protection. *Taking refuge should be something very firm* in your mind. As for the common and unique *advices which concern* going for refuge as they are explained in the *Steps of the Paths* and other books, you must be careful that you *never allow them to be broken*.

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What to Take Up and What to Give Up

The need to act properly with regard to what you should and shouldn't be doing relative to the two kinds of deeds is expressed in these lines:



Contemplate well upon white and black deeds and their results, Since this depends on acting properly, towards what to do and not.

I, the master meditator, lived my life this way; You, who seek for freedom, must try to do the same.

Generally speaking there are three kinds of faith: faith in the form of admiration, faith in the form of belief, and faith in the form of hoping for something. Here we are principally concerned with faith in the form of belief. If you carry out your practice of the laws of cause and effect with a mistaken idea about what you should and should not do, then you won't get the protection of the Three Jewels. *Contemplate well upon* the workings of *deeds and their results*, both *white* and *black*—meaning virtuous and non-virtuous. Take up the practice of virtuous deeds and their consequences, and give up non-virtuous deeds and their consequences.

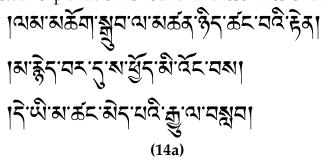
You must do so *since this* achieving protection successfully *depends on acting properly*. To put it briefly, you must first find belief in the statements of the Buddha where He described the workings of deeds and their consequences relating to virtue, non-virtue and so on. With this then you should carry out the practice of taking up what is right, and giving up what is not.

The rest of the lines here, the ones that relate to the "venerable Lamas," are easily understood.

The Foundation for Achieving the State of All-Knowing

The explanation of the foundation for achieving the state of all-knowing has two points: the actual explanation, followed by notes on how to use the four forces.

The actual explanation is found in these lines of the root text:



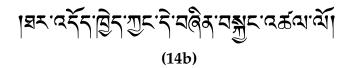
A life should possess all the features needed to reach the supreme path;
And until you find such a body and mind you won't make leaps and bounds.
Go then and learn all the causes which prevent them from being incomplete.

In order specifically to reach the supreme path—that is, the state of allknowing—you should have a life which possesses all the necessary features: qualities such as those eight factors which ripen from your past deeds. These eight include a long life, an attractive physical form, and so on. Until you can find such a body and mind you may try to practice the path, but you will not be able to make any leaps and bounds in your practice.

In order to get the kind of body and mind which has all those necessary characteristics, you have to *learn* how to bring about *the causes which* would *prevent them from being incomplete.* These causes are protecting others' lives and making offerings of light at altars, among many others.

At this point you may be doing whatever you can to follow the rules of deeds and their consequences, but because of carelessness or an attack of bad thoughts you may make slip up. The way of practicing the four forces is thus covered next in the root text:

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Polluted by downfalls and the stench of bad deeds committed through all three doors,
It's crucial to purify yourself, especially of the obstacles these deeds create.
You must then with great reverence depend on the four forces, continually.

I, the master meditator, lived my life this way; You, who seek for freedom, must try to do the same.

ITIBANANA ક્વી ક્વીંગ્વસુઅ સ્થેગા સુદ સંગભાષ્ઠ મારુ મારુ સાસે પ્રાપ્ત માર્ચ્ય પ્રાપ્ત માર્ચ્ય પ્રાપ્ત માર્ચ્ય પ્રાપ્ત માર્ચ્ય મારું માર

In general people like you and me are full of mental afflictions and the bad deeds which we have *committed through all the three doors* through which we express ourselves: our body, speech, and mind. More specifically, we are *polluted by the stench of* both those *bad deeds* which are wrong by their own nature, *and* the *downfalls* or cases where we have transgressed the rules established by the Buddha. It is crucial that you purify yourself of the two

different kinds of obstacles: those created by your bad deeds, those of your bad thoughts.

This is *especially* true *of the obstacles that bad deeds create*. You must *depend upon all four* of the *forces* involving confession and restraint, *continually*, in order to achieve this purification. These four are the force of the basis, the force of destruction, the force of turning away, and the force of the antidote. You should follow these four *with great reverence*.

The wording of the line about being "polluted" as it appears here follows a great number of versions of the text, and you should read it this way. Some liturgical works include a different particle of grammar which would make it sound like "purifying through the pollution."

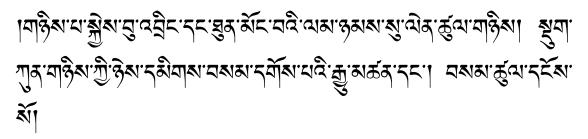
You can find more details about each of the four forces, and the way in you should do your confessions, by referring to other relevant texts. The refrain here is the same as before.

The Asian Classics Institute Course IX: The Ethical Life

Reading Ten: Description of the Medium and Greater Capacities

The following reading consists of the third major section of the *Song of My Spiritual Life (Nyam mgur)* of Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419). This text is also known as *The Short Book on the Steps of the Path (Lam-rim bsdus-don)*. Accompanying the verses of Je Tsongkapa's root text is a commentary called *Illumination of the Essence (Snying-po mdor-bsdus gsal-ba),* composed by Choney Lama Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748).



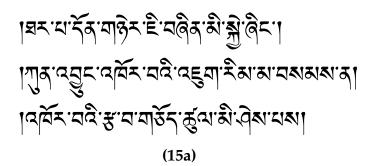


The method for putting into practice the steps of the path shared with people of medium capacity has two parts: the reasons why it is necessary to contemplate what's wrong with the truth of suffering and the truth of the source of suffering; and then the actual contemplation.

> WHY YOU MUST CONTEMPLATE WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE FIRST TWO TRUTHS

The reasons why it is necessary to contemplate what's wrong with the truths of suffering and its source are indicated in the following verse of the root text:

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If you don't make efforts to contemplate what's wrong with the truth of suffering, You won't be able to develop as you should the aspiration to be free. And if you don't think of how the truth of the source throws you into the cycle of life, Then you won't understand the way to cut

the cycle of suffering from its root.

From the very beginning, those who wish to free themselves from cyclic existence must contemplate what's wrong with the truth of suffering and the truth of the source of suffering. *The truth of suffering* includes both the general sufferings of the three lower realms and the higher realms, as well as the specific sufferings of birth, old age, aging, sickness, death, and so on.

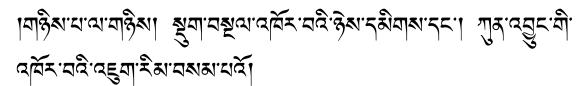
If you don't make great efforts to contemplate what's wrong with this cycle of suffering, then you will not get any great wish to be free from suffering, and

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you will not be able to develop the state of mind in which you aspire toward *freedom* in the way that you should.

You must understand the details of the nature of desire and the other (mental afflictions), and how they develop, because *if you don't think* about *how the truth of the source* of suffering acts to *throw you into the cycle of life, then you won't understand* how *to cut* the very *root* of *the cycle of suffering*. It would be like shooting an arrow at a target you can't see.

THE ACTUAL CONTEMPLATION



The actual contemplation on the problems of the first two truths has two parts: the contemplation on the truth of suffering—the problems of the cycle of life, and the contemplation on the truth of the source of suffering—how it is that we are thrown into this cycle of life.

The Contemplation on the Truth of Suffering

These lines of the root text indicate the contemplation of the truth of suffering:

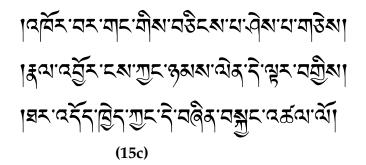


With a solid disgust for this existence that definitely wants to get out,

Look at all of the suffering in this circle of life; look at birth, aging, sickness and death, at grief and crying out in pain, at our mental unhappiness, at the heat and the cold, all the fighting, and on and on. Then *with a* fierce and *solid disgust for this existence that definitely wants to get out* of the cycle of suffering you must try to understand the cause which creates this suffering, as it will be explained later in the text.

The Contemplation on the Truth of the Source

The contemplation on the truth of the source of suffering is expressed here in the root text:



Finding out about this suffering cycle should be treated with great concern.

I, the master meditator, put this into practice; You, who seek for freedom, must try to practice this way.

Finding out about what chains you to *this suffering cycle should be treated* as something extremely important and *with great concern*. You are chained by both your deeds and your bad thoughts. If we were to divide these out into all of their different forms, there would be a great many of them. To state it in a nutshell, the mental afflictions in the mindstream of a common person—that is, desire, anger, pride, ignorance, bad forms of doubt, jealousy, and so on—are all the truth of the source of suffering in the form of mental afflictions, and the deeds which are motivated by them—both virtuous and non-virtuous—are the truth of the source of suffering in the form of deeds.

It is mainly because of our ignorance that we collect these deeds, and it is because of the deeds themselves that we are thrown into the cycle of life. We must gain a good understanding of all the steps in the twelve links of dependent origination, through which this process takes place.

To put it briefly, you must rely on the personal instructions of a spiritual guide, and thus come to realize how it is that your deeds and your bad thoughts make you circle around in this cycle of life. Then you will understand the truth of the source—the process through which you are thrown into cyclic life.

The way to cut the very root of this cycle is with the wisdom which perceives the lack of a "self." You use this wisdom to invalidate the object in which ignorance believes, and by the time you familiarize yourself with this process fully you are able to eliminate this ignorance, and thus cut the root of the cycle of suffering. When ignorance is eliminated, all the other mental afflictions are by the way removed themselves.

If between the pair of the truth of suffering and the truth of the source of suffering you are able to eliminate the truth of the source, then you will also be able to remove the truth of the source of suffering; if you cut the root of the plant, for example, the plant itself dies.

Although this is the ultimate intent of the great scriptures, us spiritual beginners nowadays are unable to eliminate our mental afflictions from their root. It is therefore a very crucial point that we eliminate that part of the source of suffering which is composed of our bad deeds and downfalls by using the method of purification which involves the four forces.

Most especially we have to exert ourselves in the three trainings of morality, [concentration, and wisdom.] The principal element involved in the training of morality is the state of mind which wants to give up performing the ten bad deeds. The principal element in the training of concentration is the high meditative state called quietude, however it is not the only element involved. The mental ability to place your mind one-pointedly for any length of time you desire on some kind of pure or virtuous object is also included into the training of concentration.

The main element in the training of wisdom is what we call "special vision," although it is not the only thing involved. Also included in the training of wisdom is the intelligence which is able to examine, in a thorough way, the correct reasonings which examine any of the varying levels of the lack of "self", as well as the kinds of wisdom which examine the meanings of any Buddhist texts or teachings.

THE ACTUAL PATH FOR PEOPLE OF GREATER CAPACITY



The method for putting into practice the steps of the path for people of greater capacity has two parts: developing the wish for enlightenment which is the basis for bodhisattva activities, and then training yourself in the activities themselves.

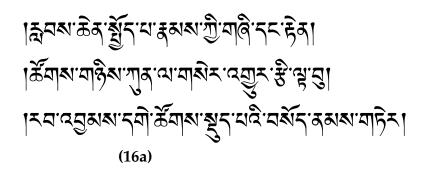
THE WISH FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

The explanation of the with for enlightenment, the basis of a bodhisattva's activities, includes two sections.

Special Features or Benefits of the Wish for Enlightenment

First I will explain the special features, or benefits of the wish for enlightenment, as expressed in the following lines of the root text:

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The wish for enlightenment is the central beam which holds up the supreme way's path; It's also the foundation and the basis of a bodhisattva's mighty activity. It is like the elixir of an alchemist for both of the two great masses, And a treasury of merit containing the collections of a myriad number of virtues.

The wish for enlightenment as it is found in the greater way is like the central beam which holds up the path of the supreme way. It is the foundation and basis which allows the mighty bodhisattva activities of giving, and the rest of the six perfections, and other such activities to come into being, to remain, and likewise to increase.

Like an *alchemical elixir* that acts to transform a piece of ordinary iron into gold, this wish transforms *both of the two great masses* of merit and wisdom into total enlightenment. It is also *a* great *treasury* which contains many great *collections of a myriad number of virtues*.

In his text, Je Tsongkapa not only indicates the reasons why we must develop the wish for enlightenment, but with the words "foundation and basis" he also shows us that this wish for enlightenment as it is found in the greater way is the very door for entering the path of the greater way.