



PRACTICE IV
The Seven Point Practice for
Developing a Good Heart (*Lojong*)

Answer Key, Class One

1) Who was the first person to openly teach the *lojong* known as the *Seven-Step Practice for Developing a Good Heart*? Remember to give his full name, and also his dates. (Tibetan track give his name and title of the text in Tibetan.)

It was the Kadampa geshe Chekawa (1101-1175).

བཀའ་གདམས་པ་དགེ་བཤེས་མཚན་ལ་བ།

kadampa geshe chekawa

The title in Tibetan is:

སློབ་སྦྱང་དོན་བདུན་མ།

lojong dun dunma

2) Why was this practice not taught openly for so many centuries?

Because people were not ready to accept the idea of exchanging their concern for fulfilling their own needs with a concern for fulfilling the needs of others, and might disrespect this idea if it was taught to them, thus collecting serious negative karma.

3) State the three resolutions that we should make after meditating on our death.

a) Knowing that we shall have to die, we must resolve to begin our practice.

b) Knowing that we could die any time, we must quit our worldly work immediately and start our practice today.

c) And finally, since nothing else can help us, we must devote ourselves to our practice only. A man who is hiking many miles doesn't fill up his pack with a lot of junk that he won't be needing.

4) List the six sufferings of a human life.

- a) **The problem that life has no certainty.**
- b) **The problem that we always want more than we have.**
- c) **The problem that we have to keep shucking off bodies, over and over again.**
- d) **The problem that we have to keep going into a new life, over and over again.**
- e) **The problem that we go up and down in our fortunes in life, over and over again.**
- f) **The problem that no one can come along with us; ultimately we are alone.**



PRACTICE IV
The Seven Point Practice for
Developing a Good Heart (*Lojong*)

Answer Key, Class Two

1) Describe the seven preliminary steps which help to prepare your mind for meditation.

- a) **Making prostrations to the objects of refuge.**
- b) **Making offerings to the holy beings.**
- c) **Confession (purification of negative karma).**
- d) **Rejoicing in the good you are doing.**
- e) **Requesting the teachers to teach.**
- f) **Requesting the teachers to stay alive.**
- g) **Dedicating the goodness you do toward becoming enlightened.**

2) Explain the meaning of the line from the root text which says, "Learn to see all things as a dream."

This line means that we should see all things as empty, which reminds us that the world is a perception forced upon us by our good and bad deeds, and allows us to do the good deeds needed to make this world a paradise and ourselves deathless angels.

3) Explain the two steps of the practice of giving and taking. (Tibetan track give the name of this practice in Tibetan.)

- a) **In the first step you imagine that you are taking away all the sufferings and bad deeds of other people by breathing them into yourself and destroying them.**
- b) **The second step is to imagine that you are giving others all of your good deeds and happiness by sending them a stream of white light upon your out-breath.**

The name of this practice in Tibetan is *tonglen*:

གཏོང་ལེན།

tonglen

4) What are the "the three objects, three poisons, and three stores of virtue"?

The three objects are things which are attractive, repulsive, and in between.

The three poisons that normally come from focusing upon them are ignorant liking, ignorant disliking, and ignorance itself.

The three stores of virtue are to become free of the three poisons by resolving to take upon oneself all the pain and causes that others are experiencing and creating due to the three poisons themselves.



PRACTICE IV
The Seven Point Practice for
Developing a Good Heart (*Lojong*)

Answer Key, Class Three

1) Explain the following two lines from the root text:

The blame all belongs to only one person.
Practice seeing them all full of kindness.

The "one person" of course is myself. In a general way, I have done things in the past that have created the problems that I have now. In a more specific way, my own selfishness has been the key to my problems, and this in turn has been caused by my tendency to misunderstand myself and my world: to think that problems come from their own side, or that they have their own self-nature.

I should see "them," meaning all the problems that come to me (whether as people or circumstances), as being "full of kindness" since they provide me with an inspiration to understand where the pain in my life is coming from and to overcome it with correct understanding.

2) The text states that, "Emptiness is the matchless protector." How does emptiness protect you?

The fact that things seem to come from their own side and have some nature of their own is a deception created by our minds. The principal one of the four bodies of a Buddha is the Dharmakaya, or the emptiness of the mind and body of an enlightened being. Remembering emptiness is the matchless protector, since we will remember that whatever we see in an otherwise blank object is coming from our own good or bad deeds, and we will automatically be inspired to avoid negative deeds.

3) The root text says, "On the spot, turn all that happens to practice." Explain how you could do this in your daily life.

"All that happens" refers to whatever problems, either with people or with the things, that happen to you. "Turn them into practice" means to use them as a reason to think about compassion and love: to think about taking away other people's problems from them, and giving them all that they hope for. This is effectively done by using the "giving and taking" practice from the previous point.



PRACTICE IV
The Seven Point Practice for
Developing a Good Heart (*Lojong*)

Answer Key, Class Four

1) Geshe Chekawa says that "the brief essentials of the instruction are combined within five powers." Name these five powers, and explain them briefly. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and explain in English.)

The five powers:

སྤྱབས་ལྷན།

topnga

a) resolutions for the future: when you wake up each day, do so with the decision that you will not waste this day, or this year, or this life, but rather you will devote your time to destroying the enemy of cherishing yourself

འཕན་པ།

penpa

b) accustoming yourself: in all your activities of the day—whether you are walking somewhere or standing or sitting or sleeping—think of ways to increase and accustom yourself to the Wish for enlightenment

གོམས་པ།

gompa

c) pure white seeds: engage in practices such as amassing great good karma and purifying yourself of negative karma, in order to increase the power of your Wish for enlightenment

དཀར་པོ་ས་བོན།

karmo sabun

- d) destruction: learn to bash the habit of cherishing yourself on the head quickly whenever it might arise**

སུན་འབྱེན་པ།

sunjinpa

- e) prayer: pray, as you lay down to sleep at night, that all your goodness of the day might be dedicated to increasing the two forms of the Wish for enlightenment within your own mind**

སྨོན་ལམ།

munlam

2) This text then goes on to teach how to use these same five powers at the point of death. Explain how to use each of these five powers as you die.

- a) resolutions for the future: deciding that, as you die, and further on in the intermediate state and elsewhere, you will never lose the attitude of the Wish for enlightenment**
- b) accustoming yourself: this is the most important of all; to be so accustomed to thinking as a bodhisattva that, as you die, you continue to have constant thoughts about wishing to reach enlightenment for the sake of others**
- c) pure white seeds: offering, as you die, everything you possess freely to both higher beings and to the benefit of suffering ones; dedicating everything you had without any feeling of possessiveness, and especially feeling no attachment to your body as you die**
- d) destruction: confessing, as you die, all the negative things you have ever done; deciding that from then on you will never do them again; and, if you are a practitioner of the secret teachings, renewing your vows by entering into the secret world yourself, or taking a new empowerment, in your final hours**
- e) prayer: to pray not that you yourself might go to a Buddha realm, but rather that in dying you could take on all the pain and bad deeds and spiritual obstacles of other living beings; and to pray as well that you might be able to reach the real Wish for enlightenment**

It is said that, if possible, one should lie down and pass on as Lord Buddha did, quietly, resting on one's right side, thinking of what will bring good to others: this is "cherishing the act."

3) What were the words that Geshe Chekawa blurted out as he lay near death?

Obviously carrying out his own advice and performing the practice of transferring his consciousness (*powa*) in the tradition of the greater way, he yelled out: "I was praying that I could pass on to the lowest hell, for the sake of helping every living being! It's not working! I can't go! All I can see before me now is the paradise of enlightenment!"



PRACTICE IV
The Seven Point Practice for
Developing a Good Heart (*Lojong*)

Answer Key, Class Five

1) Explain, one by one, these four lines of the root text:

All Dharma comes down to a single point.
There are two judges; keep the main one.
Be joy alone, in an unbroken stream.
It's there when you can keep it unthinking.

The "single point" means that all Dharma comes down to working against the tendency to cherish oneself. The two judges are oneself and others; the main judge of how your practice is going is yourself. The main judge of whether something is Dharma is whether it helps fix the mental afflictions or not. The judge of whether your practice of Dharma is successful is whether or not your mental afflictions get less.

"Be joy alone" means that, if you do get some money, don't have a lot of worries about keeping it or making it more. If you don't get any money, don't make yourself unhappy looking for it. Whatever good or bad thing happens to you, turn it into a path of Dharma. If something really bad happens, look carefully into why it came, and don't be unhappy.

The last line means that your practice of *lojong* is successful when, like a skilled horse rider, you do it well even without thinking: it has become completely natural and, if someone suddenly yells at you or even hits you, you automatically recall yourself and never react negatively.

2) Explain the meaning of the line, "Change your mind and stay the same."

This line means that you should change your mind on the inside with the three principal paths of renunciation, love, and correct worldview, but stay the same on the outside. You should not show off your attainments, but rather keep them hidden.

3) What does the text mean when it says to forget repaying criticism?

This line refers to the four points of practice of virtue. These four points are not to respond in kind with criticism to criticism, with beating to beating, with anger to anger, or with scolding to scolding.



PRACTICE IV
The Seven Point Practice for
Developing a Good Heart (*Lojong*)

Answer Key, Class Six

1) The line of the root text which says, "Don't get it backwards" refers to six types of behavior. Describe each of them briefly.

- a) **You are willing to undertake any hardship for the sake of worldly things and none for sake of the Dharma.**
- b) **You enjoy the flavor of worldly things and the not flavor of the Dharma.**
- c) **You feel compassion for those who are working hard on Dharma and not for those who are doing bad deeds.**
- d) **You aspire towards succeeding in the world rather than in the Dharma.**
- e) **You teach those who look to you for help worldly things that will hurt them later, such as business, rather than teaching them about Dharma.**
- d) **You rejoice in others' problems rather than their virtues and happiness.**

2) What does the root text mean when it says, "Figure out both and free yourself"?

It means (1) first to study how you got mental afflictions in the past: which ones are a problem for you, what kinds of thoughts set them off, and what kinds of people or objects incite them. Then (2) study how you are going to avoid these in the future, even the smallest ones.

3) What does the root text mean when it says, "Stop thinking about how wonderful you are"?

It means don't think you are so great just because you are fulfilling your duty of serving others: remember that (1) living beings desperately need your help, and (2) you have already sworn to help them, so just do it!

4) What does the root text mean when it says, "Don't expect any thanks"?

Do your *lojong* practice without expecting any help, any good words from others, or any thought of reputation or fame.