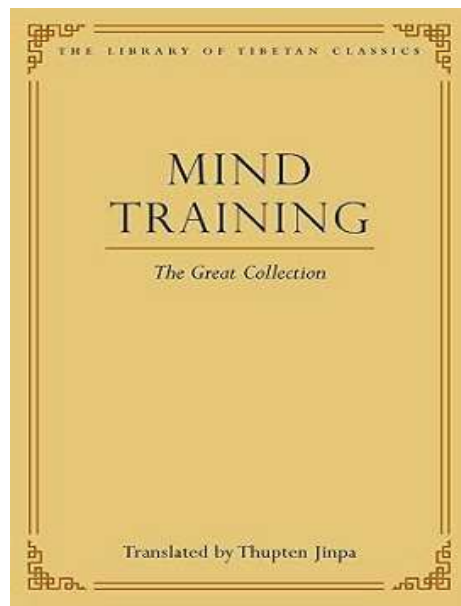


SEVEN - POINT MIND TRAINING

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Chapter 7, excerpted from
Sé Chilbu Chökyi Gyaltzen's



A Commentary on the “Seven Point Mind Training”
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7. A Commentary on the “Seven-Point Mind Training”¹⁵⁵

Sé Chilbu Chökyi Gyaltsen (1121–89)

[41] Your precious body is the source of all goodness;

In the midst of the darkness of ignorance of the three worlds
You uphold the pure light that illuminates the path to liberation—
To you, Serlingpa, who are true to your excellent name,¹⁵⁶ I bow
my head.

Following his full enlightenment Lord Śākyamuni turned the wheel of Dharma three times, and after his entry into nirvana, the authors of the commentarial treatises elucidated these [three turnings]. Through the combination of the Buddha’s sacred words and the commentarial treatises, [the teachings] flourished extensively in the world.

The doctrine is taught in two vehicles, namely the Great Vehicle and the Lesser Vehicle; the Great Vehicle is divided further into two—Mantra¹⁵⁷ and Perfection. As far as their subject matter is concerned, all of these vehicles present, either directly or indirectly, the elimination of self-grasping and the cherishing of others—the two themes. Since there is only the self-grasping to be eliminated and the well-being of others to be sought, those engaged in the practice of the Buddha’s teaching must understand how to relate whatever practice they undertake to these two endeavors. You should practice in such a manner. If you are able to, your Dharma practice will then be free of error, and you will arrive at the enlightened intent of the Buddha.

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

No. The tantras are tangled, the main treatises are disorganized, and the pith instructions remain concealed. Sealed within six parameters,¹⁵⁸ they require dependence on the teacher’s instructions [to understand]. In particular, in the context of our present uncommon Mahayana instruction, Atiśa

possessed the instructions of three teachers. First, he possessed what he received from his teacher Dharmarakṣita. This teacher gave away even parts of his own body by cutting flesh from his thighs. Atiśa stated that although Dharmarakṣita's philosophical views were inferior, based on this practice alone, one can be certain that he had attained the great seal [of perfection]. His philosophical standpoint was that of the Vaibhāṣika tenets of the Disciple's School, his scriptural authority was *Garland of Three Clubs*,¹⁵⁹ while his analytic reasoning was [based on] Aśvaghoṣa's *Ornament of Sutras*¹⁶⁰ and the *Jātaka Tales*.¹⁶¹ [42]

Second, Atiśa possessed the instructions received from Maitrīyogi.¹⁶² He was the junior Kusalī brother, and he was known as Maitrīyogi because he meditated solely on Maitreya with special focus. His philosophical standpoint was that of nonabiding [Middle Way], his scriptural authority was the sutra on the *Questions of Ākāśagarbha*,¹⁶³ while in his analytic reasoning he followed Śāntideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*¹⁶⁴ and the *Compendium of Trainings*.¹⁶⁵

Third, Atiśa also possessed the instruction he received from his teacher Serlingpa. Serlingpa's philosophical standpoint was akin to that of the non-Buddhist schools that, without relinquishing self-grasping, use it as the very ground for training. His scriptural authority was the *Teachings of Vimalakīrti*,¹⁶⁶ while in his analytic reasoning he followed the *Levels of the Bodhisattva*.¹⁶⁷ This instruction stems from Ārya Maitreya. The present teaching belongs to the instructions received from teacher Serlingpa.

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

[Egoistic] viewing of the perishable composite is the seed of the tathāgata.¹⁶⁸

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

Since the teacher Serlingpa gave this to him as the kernel of his spiritual

practice, Atiśa accorded great respect and reverence to this particular teacher, more so than to his other teachers. Atiśa stated, "The little warm-heartedness that I possess is due to the kindness of my teacher Serlingpa. Because of this, my lineage has blessings." Again, Atiśa is reported to have asserted that no remedy in either the Mantra or the Perfection vehicles can be an adequate substitute for entering the gateway of this spiritual practice. Atiśa bestowed this [teaching] upon the spiritual mentor Dromtönpa as his heart remedy practice. Although Dromtönpa had many disciples, his principal students were the three brothers.¹⁶⁹

Chenga Rinpoché is said to have stated that one must first equalize and then practice the exchange. "This," it is taught, "is the tradition of Maitrī-yogi." Potowa is reported to have stated, [43] "As for me, when I received it from the old layman from Radreng's forest of junipers,¹⁷⁰ I heard that, in the tradition of teacher Serlingpa, one must practice the exchange right from start." Here I shall present the instruction of Potowa.

This has seven points:

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

I. Presentation of the preliminary practices, the basis

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

First, train in the preliminaries.

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

To engage in the practice of the two minds of awakening, you, the prac-

tioner, should first induce enthusiasm at the beginning of your meditation session by earnestly contemplating the following points.

Reflect on the meaningfulness of having obtained a human existence of leisure and opportunity. To prevent yourself from wasting it, think: "I must practice Dharma. And among Dharma practices, this [mind training] is the most excellent." Then reflect, "Even though I may have found a human existence of leisure and opportunity, within my life's span there is no time to spare. Since in future lives I must experience happiness and suffering as fruits of my virtuous and negative karma, this [mind training] is the most excellent virtuous activity. Even for the goal of freedom from cyclic existence, no path is more profound than this. This [training] is also the supreme cause for attaining buddhahood for the benefit of self and others." Contemplate these points not only when your enthusiasm for the training of mind is strong but also when such enthusiasm is lacking. [44]

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

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

A. Training in the ultimate awakening mind

1. The actual meditation session

The meditation session divides into three—preparatory practices, the main practice, and the concluding practice. As for preparation, undertake the seven-limb practice inside your chamber of divinities,¹⁷¹ make supplications to meditation deities and your teachers, and having seated yourself comfortably on your meditation cushion, count your respiration—exhalation and inhalation—twenty-one times. With these practices, you enable your body, speech, and mind to become a fit vessel for meditative concentration. Then generate, as a precursor, the conventional awakening mind accompanied by the beneficial qualities of meditative stabilization.

During the main session, given that all of these [mind training practices]

adhere to the tradition of "simultaneous engagement," you should simultaneously meditate on the emptiness of all phenomena, including that of your own self and the self of others. Although this is true, during the preparatory stage you must relate to these phenomena in a gradual manner, enumerating each phenomenon by means of the pristine cognition of discriminative awareness. This, the master said,¹⁷² has the benefit of allowing the moisture of tranquil abiding to give birth to the shoots of realization.

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

Train to view all phenomena as dreamlike.¹⁷³

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

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

Examine the nature of the unborn awareness.¹⁷⁴

Contemplate thus: Similar [to the preceding meditation], the very mind that negated the intrinsic existence of the perceived objects [1] in terms of its past is no more, [2] in terms of its future is yet to be, and [3] in terms of its present is composed of three parts. It is devoid of color, shape, and spatial location; it cannot be said to be located in any specific point of the body; when analyzed, it is empty of all identifiable characteristics. [The perceiving mind too] abides as primordially unborn. [45]

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

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

Thus, the very mind that performs the act of applying the remedies through experiencing the emptiness of all phenomena, including your body and mind, is not established. [In general,] all objects of knowledge are subsumed

within the class of either objects or minds. Furthermore, since the mind in its generality has already been examined, you should think, "Certainly nothing is established primordially as possessing substantial reality." Free the mind of conceptualization in this manner and release it in this state of non-grasping at intrinsic nature in terms of any of the three times. Focus the mind with ease, lucidity, and vibrancy, not allowing it to fall under the influence of either dullness or excitation. This is presented by the following line:

Place your mind on the basis-of-all, the actual path.¹⁷⁵

You should identify the ordinary mind and place it in a state free of negation or affirmation. Since all seven types of consciousness are conceptual minds, relinquish them. The essential point is to avoid being tainted by a conceptualization of subject-object duality. Subsequently, whenever conceptualization arises, by observing awareness with awareness, let it rest free within reality itself. Since this constitutes actual meditation of clear light, keep your sessions intense but of short duration; within one session, you can have many subsessions. As for the length of the meditation session, it is said that "the best session should have a stable base and should end in a joyful state." At the conclusion, after dissolving your visualizations, cultivate great compassion for those without such realization. Thinking, "I shall place all beings in the undistorted truth of such ultimate mode of being," dedicate all virtues to the benefit of others. Then slowly undo your crossed legs and perform the seven-limb rites inside the chamber of divinities.

2. The subsequent period [practices]

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

In the intervals be a conjurer of illusions.

The subsequent periods must be cultivated without losing the flavor of your meditative equipoise [on emptiness]. Therefore, even though perceptions of self and others, the external environment and the beings within it, and so on arise, it is your delusion that causes nonexistent things to appear [as existing]. Contemplating such things as indistinguishable from illusory horses and elephants, relinquish clinging to substantial reality. Although you perceive yourself in terms of your five aggregates, you are but an appearance of

the mere aggregation of dependently originated things. Apart from this, no self possesses an eternal and unitary nature. [46] Contemplate and see [yourself] as an illusory person who engages in the activity of going and coming and interacts with objects. Do not remain blank, thinking nothing, but instead be sustained by mindfulness, and the instant something appears to the senses, think, "This too is illusionlike, it is dreamlike." In this way, you *experience objects by relying upon such adages [as well]*.

As you view [everything] in this manner, during the subsequent periods your mind will not become remote from the dreamlike experience of the meditation session. In this way, during the intervals between sessions, turn all your virtuous activities into the path. Abide thus in the great union, not losing the experience of the meditation session throughout all activities. To make these points, the master cited the following stanza and explained the practices of the relevant points together with their beneficial qualities:

Thus ensure that all your practices remain
Untainted by the clinging of grasping at real entities
And spread them across the vast spacelike great emptiness;
You will [then] travel in the sphere of immortal great bliss.¹⁷⁶

B. Training in the conventional awakening mind

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

He who wishes to quickly rescue
Both himself and others
Should practice the secret instruction:
The exchanging of self and others.¹⁷⁷

If you do not thoroughly exchange
Your own happiness with others' suffering,
You will not become a buddha.
Even in samsara there will be happiness.¹⁷⁸

Hence to assuage your own injuries
And to pacify others' sufferings,
You should give your own self to others
And protect others as you would yourself.¹⁷⁹

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

1. The meditation session

How to practice during the meditation session is presented by the following:

Train in the two—giving and taking—alternately.

Seated on a comfortable cushion, visualize your dear mother vividly in front. First, to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion, reflect in the following manner:

“Because she, my mother, first gave me this human existence of leisure and opportunity, which she nurtured without any negligence, I have encountered the Buddha’s teachings. Because of this [today] it is possible to grab happiness by its very snout.¹⁸⁰ She has thus helped me. Throughout all stages, when I was in her womb and after birth, she nurtured me with impossible acts of kindness. Not only that, since samsara’s beginningless time, she has constantly watched me with eyes of love, perpetually held me with affection [47], and repeatedly protected me from harm and misfortune. She has given me so much benefit and happiness and has thus embodied true kindness.”

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

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

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

Again, thinking, “I shall myself seek the complete happiness of my dear mother,” unconditionally offer your body, wealth, and all your virtues to

your mother. This is the meaning of the following lines of *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*:

To accomplish the welfare of sentient beings,
I shall turn my body into a wish-fulfilling [jewel].¹⁸¹

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

In this manner, first cultivating loving-kindness and compassion, combine giving and taking; undertake their practices so that your heart becomes even more moist and ripe than before. As you train in this manner and become capable of making an actual exchange [48]—that is, allaying your dear mother's sufferings and seeking her happiness without calculating the cost to yourself—you have reached a degree of success in this practice. The measure is that if your mother were to be reborn in the hells, for example, you would without hesitation plunge into the burning flames to rescue her.

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

You should pray, "May my body, wealth, and roots of virtue that I have unconditionally given away become food, drink, and clothing for those who lack them; may they become shelter for those who lack shelter." In this way, think, "May I become the sole cause of the happiness of both samsara and nirvana for all sentient beings; may I become the cause for eliminating all

their sufferings; may all higher qualities and fruits of the path of all sentient beings come into being in dependence upon me.” Train with your mind and recite these [aspirations] as well.

When training in such manner, you should rejoice with the following thought: “Given that even the buddhas have no aim other than the welfare of sentient beings, joyful indeed is it that I have the opportunity to implement from this very instant the heart practice of the great lord of the ten levels.”¹⁸² Again, take upon yourself the subtle obscurations to knowledge that exist within the disciples, the self-realized ones, and the noble bodhisattvas abiding on the levels, and as you give them your three factors [body, wealth, and roots of virtue], imagine that, as a result, they accomplish their accumulations and attain buddhahood. [49] All these noble ones can also be included within the general category of sentient beings; or alternatively, they can be visualized separately. Choose whichever is most convenient.

Place the two astride your breath.

You should train in the two, giving and taking, in relation to respiratory exhalation and inhalation. This makes it easier to maintain your mental focus, because the breath is readily available, and this method combats many [false] conceptualizations.

2. The subsequent period [practices]

The subsequent period [practices] are presented by the following line:

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

In the subsequent periods, train the mind by purifying the fields of your experience. When, in relation to forms, sounds, and so on that are either attractive, unattractive, or neutral, you experience emotions such as attachment, anger, and delusion, train the mind in the following manner: “Sadly, just as I indulge in sensual desires now, countless beings in the universe are dominated by desire and thus indulge in infinite [negative] acts.” Extract all of these [attachments of other beings] in one fell swoop, taking them into your heart and praying, “May all these sentient beings be endowed with the virtuous root of nonattachment.” In the same manner, extend this practice to all five poisons.

In all actions, train by means of the words.

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

*May the sufferings of all beings ripen upon me.
Through my virtues, may they all achieve happiness.*¹⁸³

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

This training by means of words in your four daily activities¹⁸⁴ involves following the sutra's admonition to cultivate loving-kindness by means of mere words. [50]

III. Taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment

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

**When the world and its inhabitants boil with negativity,
Transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment.**¹⁸⁵

Whatever harms befall you, whether caused by living beings or caused by natural elements, they are fruits of your own past negative actions. Harms are seen as adversities and obstacles by those unfamiliar with Dharma. But *for someone who has entered the gateway of Dharma, the master said, they are [exactly] like what Chengawa explained to Shawo Gangpa: "If someone possesses mind training, all of this—physical illness and mental suffering—is skillful means through which the teachers and the Three Jewels bestow their blessings and higher attainments. Therefore, you should transform all circumstances into factors conducive for training in the awakening mind.*

This has two parts: (A) training in the two awakening minds (the extraor-

dinary thoughts) and (B) striving in the dual practice of accumulation and purification (the extraordinary activities).

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

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

Taking adverse conditions onto the path by means of the conventional awakening mind is taught first. So how does one take these [adverse conditions] onto the path?

Reflect, "Since beginningless time I have failed to distinguish between enemies and friends, and as a result I have failed to recognize what is to be relinquished and what is to be adopted. I have erred, because whatever spiritual practices I may have pursued have all been endeavors of self-grasping. I have come no closer to establishing familiarity with liberation and [the Buddha's] omniscience. Today I shall therefore differentiate enemies from friends and shall ensure the success of my Dharma practice. Now my own self is the enemy, and sentient beings are the friends. So, other than viewing my own self as my enemy and relinquishing myself, and viewing others as friends and cherishing them, nothing else is to be done."

a. Recognizing your own self as the enemy¹⁸⁶

As for the reason why your own self is the enemy, this is presented by the following [line]:

Banish all blames to the single source.

This line presents the perceiving of your own self as the enemy. Whatever calamities befall you, without blaming others, you should think, "This is due to my own self-grasping." In this manner, scatter all the accusations [fomenting] within yourself. It has been taught:

Whatever harms exist in the world,
 Whatever dangers and sufferings are in the world—
 All of these arise from grasping at self;
 What use is this great demon for me?¹⁸⁷

Also:

If there is "self," recognition of "others" arises; [51]
On this division of self and others, grasping and anger arise;
And in relation to these two [emotions],
All calamities come into being.¹⁸⁸

Also:

Recognizing myself as flawed
And others as an ocean of higher qualities,
I will thoroughly discard grasping at self
And practice embracing others.¹⁸⁹

Reflect, "All shortcomings and defects I may possess, originate from my grasping at selfhood. From beginningless time, I have held onto a self when there was none. Wherever I was born, though there was no self, I have grasped at my body as [the basis of my] selfhood. Taking its side, I have resorted to rejection and affirmation depending on whether I deemed something desirable or undesirable. In this manner I have committed all three—deception, duplicity, and deviousness—toward others and, as a consequence, have accumulated afflictions and negative karma over and over again. This has compelled me, since beginningless time, to endure the incalculable sufferings of cyclic existence in general and the immeasurable sufferings of the three lower realms in particular. Still, as stated in the following,

Although countless eons have passed
With such great hardships,
You have sought only suffering.¹⁹⁰

"So long as I fail to view this [the self] as the enemy, so long will I continue to seek the well-being of this self. Consequently I will accumulate negative karma that will compel me in the future to wander in this infinite cycle of existence, where I will suffer even more and for longer than before. So this cherishing of self brings about all the sufferings of the three times. Since this [self] has been my own executioner and my enemy from beginningless time, then in all the deaths I have experienced in the beginningless cycle of existence, no one else has done the killing. Rather I have been killed by my own self!" As if biting your lower lip,¹⁹¹ firmly hold your own self as the enemy.

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

If this ancient enemy long settled,
The sole cause of steadily increasing hosts of harms,
Has found its home within my very heart,
How can there be joy for me within this cyclic existence?¹⁹²

Think that this kind of behavior—living on the head yet not giving victory to the eyes—is most inappropriate.¹⁹³ [52] Thus the focus or the site of this self-grasping, which is the source of [all] defects, is the very body you are born into. Since beginningless lifetimes you have held on to an “I” when there was none and have held on to a self when there was none. [Self-grasping] is fraught with defects and is the source of all sufferings. So to cherish, look at, and protect this discolored human corpse—a lump of pus and blood and a sack of mucus—is like carrying a bag of thorns on your back while naked! Happiness could result if you let go, but [instead] you believe that pursuing self-interest will bring happiness and thus sink ever deeper into suffering as though you craved it. Śāntideva, too, states:

Whatever suffering is in the world
Arises from wishing for one’s own happiness;
Whatever happiness is in the world
Arises from the wish for others’ happiness.

What need is there to say more?
The childish pursue their own interests,
While the buddhas act for the welfare of others:
Observe the difference between these two.¹⁹⁴

Among all the afflictions that have harmed you since beginningless time, this self-grasping [is the worst]. This jealous, evil-ridden [force] that [makes beings] commit negative acts against all other beings, from high spiritual teachers to lice, resides right here [in you]. It obstructs the attainment of freedom from cyclic existence and ties beings further into bondage. This [force] welcomes all human and nonhuman agents of harm. This owl-headed betrayer¹⁹⁵ is the very mind that grasps on to “I” or “self” and seeks only its own selfish ends. Thinking in this manner, you should recognize the enemy as the enemy. Śāntideva states:

Within all the hundreds of world systems
Of cyclic existence, this has harmed me.
Rouse your vengeance thus
And destroy thoughts of self-interest.¹⁹⁶

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

The old days when you could
Ruin me at will are now gone;
I can see you now, so where are you off to?
I shall tear down your arrogance.¹⁹⁷

Contemplate along these lines, and whenever any self-centered thought arises, the master said, you should be cognizant and strike at the snout of this boar with a cane. [53] Therefore it was taught that as far as the subject matter of all the teachings of the Great Vehicle is concerned, there are only the two themes: (1) totally letting go of self-grasping and (2) upholding sentient beings with deep concern and, on this basis, crippling this self-grasping as much as you can and nurturing sentient beings as much you can.

Furthermore, since all the sacred scriptures and treatises were taught for the purpose of subduing the afflictions, it is the afflictions that must be subdued by means of them. In general there are 84,000 afflictions, all of which, when subsumed, fall into 212 classes.¹⁹⁸ When subsumed, they in turn fall into the class of six root afflictions and twenty derivative afflictions. These, too, can be further subsumed into the five or three poisons. When subsumed further, they are reduced into a single affliction, namely the self-grasping alone. He who has subdued it to the highest degree enjoys the highest degree of happiness; to a medium degree, a medium degree of happiness; and to a minimal degree, a minimal degree of happiness. He who has not subdued it to any degree will enjoy no happiness at all. So the root of suffering is self-grasping; and since all faults and defects are contingent upon this, you must from now on abandon any clinging to your body and mind and instead regard them as your enemies. Most importantly you must abandon your clinging to the body. On this point Śāntideva states:

If I am attached to my body,
 Fear arises from even slight dangers.
 This body that brings so much fear—
 Who would not detest it like an enemy?¹⁹⁹

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

By engaging in these practices, [54] the master entreated, strive to the best of your ability to subdue this self-grasping demon during your brief life.

Shawopa states: “So long as we fail to see our own self as the enemy, no one, including our teachers, can save us. If we see it as the enemy, benefits will ensue.”²⁰⁰

So if you view your own self as the enemy, even when harms caused by hosts of nonhumans and malevolent elemental spirits befall you, these become harms perpetrated against the enemy. They become aids in your battle against self-grasping. Since they are a powerful army on your side, it is inappropriate to generate anger toward these agents of harm; rather, you should look on them with joy. At some point in the future, the master said, there will emerge a true spiritual practice that can free you from the narrow gorges of adverse conditions. At that point you should train in [the recognition of others as] friends.²⁰¹ In this manner, train now to distinguish between self and others as enemy and friends, respectively.

Occasionally, you should train your mind also by drawing a distinction between enemy and friend even within yourself. You can give your lay name to your thoughts and actions concerned with the pursuit of your own welfare and your ordination name to your thoughts and actions concerned with the pursuit of others' welfare.²⁰² Then, following the example of the spiritual

mentor Ben, correlate your arms, right and left, to avoidance [of nonvirtue] and adoption [of virtuous acts]. The spiritual mentor Ben states: "I have no other task than to stand guard with a short spear of antidote at the entrance of my mind. When they [the afflictions] are vigilant, I too am vigilant; when they are relaxed, I too am relaxed."²⁰³ Also, "You should be vigilant and strike at the snout of each boar with a cane and chase it."²⁰⁴ All the sutras and the commentarial treatises [too] demonstrate that there is no task other than eliminating self-grasping.

These, then, present the viewing of one's own self as the enemy and the elimination of self-grasping. Because of Shawopa's teachings, the expression "the practice for smashing the demon's head" evolved.

b. Recognizing sentient beings as friends and cherishing them

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

Toward all beings contemplate their great kindness.

Shapopa calls this "the spiritual practice of carrying the flesh and carrying the blood."²⁰⁵ It is called "the practice of accepting all ill omens as charms."²⁰⁶ Here one deliberately focuses on the perpetrators of harm and cultivates loving-kindness and compassion and then trains in giving and taking.

First, the meditation on loving-kindness is as follows. Reflect, "These humans and nonhumans, who perpetrate harms against me, have been related to me so many times as my parents, as siblings, and as friends—[55] the frequency of which is greater than the [quantity of] *kolāsita* nuts [required to cover the face of the earth]."²⁰⁷ They have constantly looked at me with eyes of love, perpetually sustained me with affectionate hearts, and constantly guarded me from harms and inexpedient situations. They have helped me with all kinds of benefits and happiness and are thus embodiments of true kindness." Reflecting thus, develop deep and earnest empathy and feel as though, were you able to place them deep within your heart, you would still not be content. View them as if they were pieces of your own heart. Atiśa refers to [sentient beings] as "my divinities" and "my spiritual teachers."

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

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

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

The world of humans is replete with element spirits and diseases,
But these are pacified with power of truth by those who care and
have compassion.²⁰⁸

When you cultivate loving-kindness and compassion toward the perpetrators of harm, you arrive at the following realization: "Since beginningless time, they have only benefited me, yet I have given only harm in return. [56] Therefore, from now on, I shall help them and protect them from harm." With this thought, combine the two practices of giving and taking and train your mind. Take upon your self all leprosy and sickness in the world.²⁰⁹ Heap upon your present sickness all the negative karma within your own life, all that you are likely to reap in the remainder of your life or in your future life, and rejoice.

Again, train as follows. Invite the malevolent nonhuman spirits in front of you and declare: "The number of times you have been my mother is beyond count. Also, if I were to pile together the number of times I ate your flesh, drank your blood, chewed your bones, wore your skin, and sucked your milk, even the entire trichiliocosm universe would be too small to contain it all. I have also killed you, assaulted you, and robbed you countless

times. Today you have thus come to collect the debt. Today please take [in return] all these debts of kind acts and dues. It is appropriate that you own me, for you have been most kind indeed."

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

To all beings of the six realms
I offer ritual cakes in the four directions.
How much I yearn for the time
When I'm devoured and carried away by insects!²¹⁰

Then [imagine that] the nonhuman spirit rises up instantly and devours you from head to heels, smearing his mouth with your blood. His body full, his harmful intentions disappear, and he becomes endowed with altruistic thoughts. Imagine that, as a by-product, your negative karma becomes cleansed. Imagine that a moment later, your body rematerializes and is again devoured. Visualize this over and over. Imagine that your body is cut into a hundred or a thousand pieces, and these are then given away everywhere. In particular, share this body and mind in places of special sensitivity [such as cemeteries]. Then, with the thought "This body [of mine] belongs to him," undertake all virtuous practices for [the nonhuman spirit's] sake. Even the concluding dedication should be done on his behalf. In particular, where such nonhuman forces reside, mentally discard your body, [57] and cutting it open right there, with blood soaking everything, offer it with the thought "Now eat!"

Then let go of cherishing your body as stated:

I have already given this body
To all beings to do with as they please;
Let them do whatever they wish, such as beating it;
Why should I be concerned?²¹¹

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

Shawopa states: "Search for the enemy in oneself; search for a god in the

demons; search for virtues in nonvirtues; and search for happiness in suffering.”²¹²

Langri Thangpa, too, says: “No matter what profound scriptures I open, I find none that do not suggest that all faults are one’s own, and that all higher qualities belong to brother and sister sentient beings. Because of this, you must offer all gain and victory to others and accept all loss and defeat for yourself. I have found no other meaning.”²¹³

Shawopa states: “If someone finds a meaning other than this, it is an error.”²¹⁴ In brief, the master said, no other intent can be found in all the scriptural collections. With this, the taking of adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment by means of conventional awakening mind has now been presented.

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

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

With the three views and treasury of space,
The protection of yoga is unexcelled.
By meditating on illusions as the four buddha bodies,
Emptiness is protection unsurpassed.²¹⁵

Conclude decisively that everything in this world of appearance, both the external environment and the beings within—such as the object of impairment and the agent of impairment²¹⁶—are only deluded perceptions of your own mind. As mere deceptive, deluded appearances, both [polarities] will cease within moments, with no time either to injure or to engage in any negation or affirmation. So even conventionally, nothing exists as an object or agent of harm. On the ultimate level no phenomenon is primordially established. Like the center of a spotless sky, [phenomena] are all one.

Since self is an awareness devoid of substantial reality, and the agent of harm is an awareness devoid of substantial reality as well, neither exists as the object of impairment or the agent of impairment. Everything is empty, and emptiness cannot be attacked by emptiness. Just as the eastern part of the sky [58] cannot cause harm to the western part, they [the object of impair-

ment and the agent of impairment] cannot injure each other. Therefore, since your current perceptions are illusions of a deluded mind—the self, the object of impairment, and the illnesses—other than being constructs of your mind, nothing can be established in terms of identity. It is taught:

Your own mind is māra;
Your own mind is the obstructive force;
All obstructive forces arise from conceptualization;
Therefore relinquish conceptualization.²¹⁷

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

Reflect: "Although phenomena are not established primordially, yet I remain bound, as though unable to undo knots made in the sky or strangled by a tortoise-hair noose."²¹⁸ As such, my mind has arisen as a demon, and chained by conceptualization, I remain bewildered in suffering." All hopes and fears, such as fearing illness or harm from ghosts, or hoping to be cured of illnesses, as well as all thoughts of negation and affirmation in emptiness, place them all within the sphere of emptiness and release them within ultimate reality itself. [59]

Imagine that, unable to bear this, you react violently, pulling at the hem of your clothes and shouting your name aloud. You tremble, the hairs on your body stand up, and you experience the dissolution of the ten classes of

consciousness.²¹⁹ At that instant [although] there are two [streams of] awareness, think that they are both your own mind; they are but [different] modes of perception. As you contemplate thus, your thoughts and awareness will calm, and your body and mind will rest in their own natural states. When the thought arises spontaneously, “Oh, everything is my mind,” nonconceptuality dawns in its nakedness.

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

View this absence of four resultant buddha bodies—which are separate from the three factors of sickness, malevolent forces, and your own mind—as the [actual] four buddha bodies. In this way you recognize that every conceptualization places the four buddha bodies in your very palms. View every conceptualization as a resounding signal of ultimate reality. View all illnesses and malevolent forces as embodiments of kindness. This is the “instruction on introducing the four buddha bodies,” which presents the transformation of adverse conditions into the path by means of the ultimate awakening mind.

To conclude the practice of the two awakening minds, or as a meditation implicit within it, cultivate the following viewpoint to help cut [the knots of] expectations and apprehensions: “Since this perpetrator of harm has led me to train in the two awakening minds, it is placing enlightenment in my very palms. It is thus most kind indeed. Furthermore, like a messenger it bears a warning: ‘Since a suffering like the present one comes about as a consequence of a cause—a negative, nonvirtuous karma—if you wish to avoid suffering you should purify its cause, the negative karma. In the future, forsake all negative acts.’ [The perpetrator of harm] is therefore kind indeed.”

Think, “These perpetrators of harm [60] expose my lack of antidotes, my failure even to notice afflictions arising, and are thereby definitely emanations of my teacher.” Thinking thus, view them with joy from the depths of your heart. Think, furthermore, “This perpetrator of harm reveals within this very life the sufferings of a future lifetime in the lower realms—the fruit of past lives’ negative karma. He holds the drawstring [of the sack] of the

lower realms and is therefore most kind indeed." Reflecting, "If he has benefited me this much, he must definitely be [an expression of] the enlightened activities of the teachers and the Three Jewels," view the perpetrator of harm as desirable, endearing, and close to your heart. You should view sickness and suffering as possessing similarly beneficial qualities.

Even if you contract leprosy, you should reflect, "This will bring future sufferings to the fore. This life is but a momentary event, and if I were not afflicted by leprosy and illness, my mind would be embroiled in the chores of this life, leading me to accumulate negative karma. Given that [illnesses and so on] end this [mundane way of life] abruptly and enable me to encounter Dharma, they help me take the essence of this bodily existence." View leprosy and sickness with heartfelt, uncontrived joy. Furthermore, think, "Sickness and suffering engender true renunciation in me; for without suffering, there can be no true renunciation. Since they definitely help dispel the afflictions of my mind, they help me realize the teachings' intent. So they are most kind indeed!" For it is stated:

With disenchantment arrogance is dispelled.²²⁰

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

Toward samsaric beings, generate compassion.²²¹

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

When you learn to train your mind in this manner, all activities of your body, speech, and mind, and everything that appears in the field of your senses will be transformed into the two accumulations. From that point onward, you will obtain the spiritual practice that ensures nothing is wasted. [61] It is from here that the three innumerable eons start. With this, the training in the two awakening minds—the special thoughts—has been presented.

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

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

The fourfold practice is the most excellent method.

When you encounter suffering, thoughts desiring happiness arise uncontrollably. Experience such moments as motivating you in the following manner.

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

If being sick is best, please make me ill;
 If being cured is best, please restore my health;
 If being dead is best, please make me die;
 If long life is best, please prolong my life;
 If shorter life is best, please shorten my life.
 May all enjoy the fortune of enlightenment.²²²

2) The second practice, the purification of negative karma, is as follows. Again, imagine that suffering comes as a messenger, exhorting you, “If you do not desire suffering, abandon its cause, which is negative karma.” With this thought, purify negative karma through the four powers.²²³ In the presence of the Three Jewels, engage also in the rites requesting forbearance and in the extensive purification rites.

3) The third practice, making offerings to the malevolent forces, is as follows. Offer tormas to the perpetrators of harm. Those who can mentally cope should also do the following meditation:

Summon in front of you the perpetrator of harm, visualized as a meditation deity, and reflect, "You are kind indeed, for you have led me to the two awakening minds; you have helped me in my quest to find happiness and dispel suffering. [62] I request you further to cause all the sufferings of sentient beings to ripen in my current illness. Please do not depart. Instead stay inside this body of mine and ensure that this sickness is not cured but endures."

Thus joyfully let go of your body and mind, and cut [the rope of] all expectations, apprehensions, and desire for happiness. Without dwelling on sadness, from the depth of your heart, experience a blissful enthusiasm. Those unable to contemplate along these lines should here cultivate loving-kindness and compassion with special emphasis. Reflect, "Since you obstruct my work for the benefit of all sentient beings, you will be reborn in the hells in your next life. I shall help you with material and spiritual gifts; cease harming me, therefore, and leave." Exhorting thus, confront them with words of truth. Visualizing the perpetrators of harm as deities is like placing an evil person in the domain of the king. They cannot then do any harm. This is another approach.

4) The fourth practice is offering tormas to the Dharma protectors and supplicating them as follows: "Please ensure that no obstacles arise in my meditative practice. Remember the promises and the solemn oaths you have taken in the presence of the buddhas."

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

Having presented the practice of taking adverse conditions onto the path, the following is now stated to present the yoga of in-between sessions:

Relate whatever you can to meditation right now.

When adverse circumstances unexpectedly strike, train in the two awakening minds right there and then. For instance, if you are struck with leprosy or a severe infectious disease,²²⁴ if you are lynched by a crowd, beaten up,

robbed, or attacked with weapons, or if you simply fail to meet your desired conditions (by encountering harms caused by nonhuman forces or acute, unbearable sufferings), think how the vast universe contains infinite cases like your own, and generate compassion for those [enduring these sufferings]. As you mentally take all of these in one fell swoop upon your own suffering, imagine your suffering increasing to such an intensity that your heart could break open. [63]

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

Langri Thangpa states, “All of what is called ‘transforming adverse conditions into enlightenment’ entails the cessation of expectations and apprehensions. So long as these two do not cease, one cannot take adverse conditions onto the path. Even if one were eventually led to the path that is free of expectations and apprehensions, training in the differentiation of enemy and friends at such a time would be like trying to straighten a crooked tree.”²²⁵

IV. Presentation of a lifetime’s practice in summary

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

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

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

1) First is the *power of propelling intention*. “From now until my full enlightenment I shall never be divorced from the two awakening minds, and I shall not allow my mind training to lose its continuity. I shall make sure to never be divorced from the two awakening minds until my death.” Bless yourself by resolving in terms of “this year” and “this month,” and so on. Repeatedly propel your thoughts in this way with great force.

2) The *power of acquaintance* refers to cultivating the two awakening minds at all times, free of distraction.

3) The *power of positive seed* means striving during the period in between sessions in virtuous activities—such as engaging in the ten spiritual practices, free of any damaging interferences from your body, wealth, and so on—for the purpose of engendering those [experiences of] this teaching that have not yet arisen and enhancing those already arisen. [64]

4) The *power of eradication* is the actual eradication of self-grasping. How long have you wandered in cyclic existence in general and in the three lower realms in particular? This is brought about by cherishing your self and desiring its happiness. Even within this life, all undesirable events—being incapable of maintaining a relationship with your partner, failing to have integrity with respect to your promises and vows, and having no interest in cultivating the realizations of such spiritual attainments, from the [recognition of the rarity of] precious human existence to [the realization of] no-self—all are due to cherishing your self and desiring its happiness. Every one of your defects is therefore contingent upon this. With the thought “From hereon I shall never seek the self’s welfare for even a single instant; instead, I must totally eliminate this,” view [self-cherishing] in this manner and regard it as the enemy.

5) The *power of aspirational prayer* is this. At the conclusion of all virtuous activities, make the following aspiration: “From this moment until I have attained buddhahood, throughout all my lives, may I never be divorced from the two awakening minds, and may I instead train in them. May I know how to take all circumstances that befall me, whether positive or adverse, into this training.” [Then] make offerings to the teachers and the Three Jewels, and offer a tormā to the Dharma protectors and the elemental spirits, supplicating them thus: “Help me so that I am never divorced from the two awakening minds throughout all my lives. Help me to meet sublime teachers who reveal this teaching.” This, the master said, is a teaching that folds everything into a single [utterance of] *Hūṃ*.

**As Mahayana’s transference method is
The five powers alone, their practice is vital.**

Thus when he [or she] who has trained his mind throughout his entire life contracts a fatal illness and becomes aware of his imminent death, he must apply this very [mind training] teaching as the time-of-death instruction

and effect the transition while engaged in such practice. Practices such as tantra cannot be practiced at this juncture; he [or she] should go through the transition by means of the five powers alone.

1) First undertake the practice of the power of *positive seed*.²²⁶ To do this, you offer your belongings to the teachers and the Three Jewels as the gifts of the deceased.²²⁷ It is inappropriate to give these [belongings] to beings who might be your objects of clinging. [65] Prepare so that even in your aftermath, your possessions do not become conditions for accumulating negative karma. Make excellent offerings to those worthy of veneration. It is not appropriate to offer [only] tokens of your belongings to those who are embodiments of kindness.²²⁸ Then, without any attachment to your possessions of this life, generate a fearless attitude with regard to your future life.

2) The power of *aspirational prayer* is as follows. Lay out an excellent array of offerings in the presence of the Three Jewels, request forbearance for your shortcomings, and declare and purify your negative karma. Review as well the pledges you have taken, such as that of going for refuge. Then make offerings to the Three Jewels, offer tormas to the Dharma protectors, and make this fervent request to be led to the threshold of the path: "Bless me so that in the intermediate state and the next life I will remember the two awakening minds and engage in their practice. Help me to encounter sublime teachers who reveal this teaching. Lead me to the beginning of my path of happiness. Today I place my hope in you." Then invoke the following aspirations again and again: "May I train in the two awakening minds during the intermediate state; may I train in the two awakening minds throughout all lives; may I meet sublime teachers who reveal this teaching."

3) The power of *eradication* is as follows. "That which grasps at self and 'I' has made me suffer since beginningless time. This has also brought about my present suffering. So long as I am not divorced from this, no happiness can arise. How have I allowed it to ruin me? This happened because I have assumed a [corporeal] body. So I shall definitely not assume a [corporeal] body in the intermediate state. I shall allow my mind to fade into space." Reflecting in this manner repeatedly, eradicate self-grasping.

4) Next is the power of *propelling intention*. "In the past I have enhanced the two awakening minds so that their continuity did not cease. I shall now recall the two awakening minds in the intermediate state and engage in their training." Reflect along these lines and repeatedly recall [the two minds].

5) As for the power of *acquaintance*, the key is to first train uninterruptedly in the awakening mind.

Then, as you approach the moment of death, lie down on your left and, placing your right hand on your cheek, block the right nostril with your little finger [66] and breathe through the left nostril. This is transference in terms of your conduct.

Then, preceded by loving-kindness, train in the dual practice of giving and taking on the basis of your in- and out-breaths. While in this state, engage in the practice of ultimate awakening mind thus, contemplating, "Everything that shares the nature of samsara and nirvana has its root in the deluded mind."²²⁹ As for the mind, it never deviates from its primordial nature of dharmakāya." Reflect how, in reality, even what is called death has no existence. Combine these two [contemplations], engage in their practice, and die while in that mindstate.

If this is unlikely to be feasible, then arouse the true nature of samsara and nirvana that is free of rejection and affirmation within the expanse of the ever-present innate dharmakāya, which is the uncontrived mind itself. Release your mind restfully in the ultimate expanse and place it upon the mind's ultimate nature, which is devoid of transference. Then, even if you are unable to die [in tune with the meditative state] because of temporarily losing your mindfulness, you will still die with the instruction [appropriate] for the moment of death. Although numerous celebrated moment-of-death instructions exist, the master said, nothing is more amazing than this [instruction presented here]. With these, the complete aspects of the path have been presented without omission.

V. Presentation of the measure of having trained the mind

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

The intent of all teachings converges on a single point.

The scriptures and the treatises were taught for the purpose of overcoming self-grasping, thus there is no target other than this for the trio of study, reflection, and meditation to destroy. When examined, the selfhood of persons is as nonexistent as the horn of a rabbit; [nevertheless] it has made us suffer since beginningless time. Observe and analyze whether all your endeavors of body, speech, and mind are directed toward reinforcing [your grasping at the selfhood of persons] or bringing its downfall. If they are

reinforcing it, you are striving solely out of the eight mundane concerns and for the pursuit of greatness in this life. If this is the case, then even if you are observing ethical discipline with dedication, you have erred with regard to your paternal [spiritual] lineage. [67] Even if you are training the mind through study, reflection, and meditation, the practice has gone awry. On the other hand, if your endeavors are toppling self-grasping, you are [achieving the] true purpose of ethical discipline with industry and you are training [the mind] with skillfulness. In this way, by giving rise to genuine mind-training realizations in your mind, you can likewise attain the full measure of Dharma practice. Since this is a benchmark for determining whether a Dharma practice has truly become a Dharma practice, the master said, this is the long bar of a scale on which the practitioner is weighed. Learn how to turn all your endeavors of body, speech, and mind into antidotes to self-grasping.

Of the two witnesses uphold the principal one.²³⁰

People might say of you, “This brother’s heart has become softened, like a piece of wool that is taken out of water [after being washed].²³¹ Genuine spiritual practice has arisen in him. ‘True Dharma practitioner’ refers to all who are like him.” Not being disapproved of by those who are reputedly sublime is a [form of] witness. But this should not be the principal one. Why? Because others may praise you when they observe one or two good actions or when you do a few things that please them, but other people cannot fully penetrate the depth [of your character].

What, then, is the principal [witness]? Regard it to be not becoming the object of your own disapproval. You should be able to feel that, even if you were to die this evening, you could have done nothing more. For you have striven to the best of your capacity with faith, intelligence, and perseverance, regardless of how weak these may have been, such that your guts become filled with air, and blood and water gushes out of them.²³² At that point you have attained a qualified stage of meditative practice. Therefore hold this fact of not being the object of your own disapproval as the principal witness.

Cultivate constantly the joyful mind alone.

This line suggests that, having trained your mind and tasted the flavor of

[true] Dharma practice, no matter what adverse circumstances befall you, you experience no disturbance within, for you [immediately] think: "I can cultivate its remedy, the two awakening minds." Remaining unassailed in such a manner is also a measure of having trained your mind.

Again, regarding the four desirable things and four undesirable things in the world, when you train the mind by focusing on the four undesirable things, everything becomes desirable. You will find thus no narrow mountain terrains or impediments, thus your mind will always be filled with joy, and the edifice [of your mind training practice] will not crumble. [68] This too is a measure of having trained the mind.

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

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

Just as a skilled horseman does not fall when distracted by the horse suddenly rearing up, in the same way, once your mind is trained, then even when unexpected adversities arise—such as unanticipated criticism and denigration—you instantly cope by [applying appropriate] antidotes. In this way, if [adversities] become factors conducive to the awakening mind, and if you do not fall prey to the adverse conditions, your mind is trained.

Furthermore, cultivate the thought, "The time of death is uncertain, and were it to come suddenly, I have no means [of facing it] other than this [practice]. This is true Dharma; wonderful indeed is my path!" In this manner, make sure you fortify the mind so that no matter when you die, you will do so joyfully and with a palpable warmth within. If you possess these signs of being trained, illnesses and [harms caused by] possessors will enhance your realizations. This doesn't mean that you need not train your mind further. This merely presents the measure of when [the application of] the remedy attains the measure of completeness.

VI. Presentation of the commitments of mind training

Train constantly in the three general points.

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

1) The first point entails relinquishing all behaviors that disregard the law of karma and its results. [This includes behaviors such as] defying the minor precepts with the assertion “Since I am training the mind, nothing can harm me,” and engaging in actions that contradict the general [Dharma] practice with the assertion “If one has this mind training, one needs nothing else.” [69] Engage in mind training by means of your thought, while in your actions observe, in a pure way, all the pledges and commitments you have taken, from the opening stanzas [of the ethical discipline texts] up to the Vajrayana. Make sure your practice and day-to-day way of life accord with and can withstand close scrutiny judged against the [three] scriptural collections.

2) The second point entails discarding such obnoxious behaviors as sleeping in harmful places, felling harmful trees,²³³ visiting areas where you may contract contagious diseases, associating with people who are degenerate in their commitments, with lepers, or with those possessed by spirits. Do not act contrary to the Kadampa’s way of life, a great tradition that has been established by Geshe Dromtönpa at Radreng. Practice the teaching instead as if [lifting all] four corners of square [cloth]. Shawopa states: “Examine where you might go wrong. You have erred when your spiritual practice becomes offensive.”²³⁴ Forsake consorting with those who are degenerate in their commitments or in their morality or who commit negative acts, and make sure your conduct does not become obnoxious.

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

Transform your attitudes but remain as you are.

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

Do not speak of the defects [of others].

This states that you should never speak of others' defects—neither their worldly defects, for instance by calling them "That blind person," [70] nor their spiritual defects, for instance by calling them "That morally degenerate person."

Do not reflect on others' shortcomings.

It is inappropriate to ruminate about the shortcomings of sentient beings in general and particularly of those who have entered the monastic order, especially your fellow practitioners. At the least, you should be joyful toward them, for you are training the mind. Even if you happen to feel that certain associations may be inappropriate, since you are training the mind, contemplating others' shortcomings is inappropriate. If you do happen to lose control and notice another's shortcoming, think, "This is my own deluded perception; no such flaw exists in them. All sentient beings are endowed with the nucleus of buddhahood." Reflect in this manner and judge this [perception] to be your own flaw.

Discard all expectations of reward.

Discard all expectations, such as respect for your mind training; material gifts, services, and fame; protection against harms caused by nonhumans in

this and future lives; the attainment of a joyful human or celestial existence; and the attainment of nirvana. Ensure that you have no expectation even of buddhahood for your own sake. Do not harbor impatience and excessive expectation even for the meditative qualities, for were the demons to become aware of this, they could create obstacles. Even if you exert strong effort with no loss of interest for a long time but still get no results, do not become discouraged.

Discard poisonous food.

[Poisonous food is] the harboring of self-interest in the depth of your heart. Never fail to perceive self-grasping as the enemy, or fail to let go of self-cherishing and the thoughts that grasp at the substantial reality of things. These make everything you do into a cause of cyclic existence, thus binding you [ever more] within cyclic existence and giving rise to suffering. Since these are all like poisonous food, you must discard them.

Do not maintain [inappropriate] loyalty.

This means you should not refrain from expressing condemnation out of disapproval of unjust acts committed by the other.

Do not torment with malicious banter.

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

Do not lie in ambush.

Do not harbor vengeance for a wrong done to you, waiting for an opportune moment to retaliate. [71]

Do not strike at the heart.

Toward both humans and nonhumans, avoid delving into their weak points. With nonhumans, for instance, you should avoid uttering fierce

life-extracting mantras; and in the case of humans, you should avoid unearthing, for instance, their moral lapses in situations where many people are around.

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

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

Do not sprint to win a race.

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

Do not abuse this [practice] as a rite.

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

Do not turn the gods into demons.

When displeased, the worldly gods cause harm. The gods are supposed to be beneficial in general; so if they cause harm, they then become demons. Similarly, mind training is supposed to subdue self-grasping. Avoid, therefore, becoming inflated by its practice and generating conceited thoughts such as "I am an excellent practitioner of mind training; others lack this spiritual practice." Avoid ridiculing and insulting others out of a sense of superiority. If practitioners strengthen their grasping at the self-existence of

phenomena, their practice becomes an endeavor of the enemy. It becomes the act of allowing a thief to escape into the forest while looking for his footprints on a rocky mountain. Avoid all such conduct and, by disgracing to self-grasping, ensure that the medicine is applied right where the illness is. Comport yourself as the lowest of the low among the servants of all sentient beings.

Do not seek misery as a means to happiness.

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

VII. Presentation of the precepts of mind training

Since your mind training will not degenerate but will [in fact] take you to progressively higher levels, you should engage in the practice of this teaching.

Accomplish all yogas through a single means.

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

Overcome all errors through a single means.

Some who are under Māra's influence fail to develop confidence in this spiritual practice. They experience the false perceptions of misguided medita-

tion practice, with thoughts like: "Since I began practicing mind training, illnesses have increased, harms from demons have increased, people have become more hostile, and afflictions such as self-grasping have increased as well." Based on such thoughts, or for no particular reason, they lose enthusiasm for mind training and are in danger of turning away. When this happens, you should become aware of it right there and then and think, "A misguided meditative practice has arisen in me." With a second thought you should reflect, "There must be many beings like me in the universe whose thoughts have deviated from [true] Dharma practice," and take all of these [deviations] upon yourself and offer your body, wealth, and virtues to others. Imagine that because of this, the thoughts of those others turn toward the Dharma, and these others enter the unmistakable path. [73]

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

In the morning, after getting up, you should project the thought "Throughout this day I shall make sure I don't become tainted by the clinging of self-cherishing. I shall make sure that thoughts cherishing others do not degenerate." Then, during the day, remain sustained by the vigilance that accompanies [everyday] activity. When going to bed at night, while in the meditative absorption "lion's majestic pose," sequentially review [the day] by recalling, "First I did this, then I did that, and so on." If you detect any transgression, it is stated, "At that instant enumerate your flaws / And recall your teacher's instructions."²³⁵ Then cultivate the following thought: "Isn't it amazing that there are people like me who waste their precious human existence and bring harm upon themselves!" Thinking thus, appeal for forbearance, declare and purify your negative karma, and cultivate the resolve to forsake this in the future. If you have not committed any transgression, then rejoice, thinking "I have indeed made my human existence meaningful." Dedicate the virtues toward the aspiration to realize this practice in your mental continuum. [Also] make the aspiration prayer, "May I never be divorced from the two awakening minds throughout all my lives."

Forbear whichever of the two arises.

If you suddenly come into a great fortune, do not become arrogant or become attached to it; make sure you do not fall prey to the eight mundane concerns. You should take this [fortune] as a basis for your Dharma

practice. Some people who attract followers and material gifts become conceited by this; they [then] despise others and do whatever comes to mind. You must discard such behavior.

Likewise, if you experience misfortune such that the only thing that seems beneath you is the water [flowing under a bridge], do not become depressed or demoralized, wondering how “such an unfortunate person like me” could exist. Do not be so downcast you are incapable of training [the mind].

Instead reflect, “Compared to the contrast in degree and intensity between the happiness of the higher realms and the suffering of the lower realms of existence, the contrast between pleasant and unpleasant states of human existence is not so immense. So, without further distraction, I shall focus on my spiritual practices.” For it is taught:

Even if you are prosperous like the gods,
Pray do not be conceited.
Even if you become as destitute as a hungry ghost,
Pray do not be disheartened.²³⁶

Guard the two even at the cost of your life.

These are (1) the precepts and commitments presented in the teachings in general and (2) the commitments of this particular [mind training] teaching, [74] such as “Do not speak of the defects [of others].”²³⁷ Since even the mundane happiness of this present life will elude you if these two commitments become degenerate, hold them more dearly than your life.

Train in the three difficult challenges.

When eliminating the afflictions, in the beginning it can be difficult to remember the antidotes, in the middle it can be difficult to overcome the afflictions, and at the end it can be difficult to eradicate the continuum of the afflictions. Therefore make sure you accomplish these three without [great] difficulty. To train, [first thing] in the morning put on the armor with respect to all three [stages]. When the afflictions [actually] arise, recall their antidotes, counter them, and cultivate the resolve “From here on I shall never allow the afflictions to arise in my mind.”

Adopt the three principal conditions.

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

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

Contemplate the three that are free of degeneration.

Since all the attainments of the Mahayana depend upon the student's faith and respect [toward his or her teacher], make sure you are never divorced at any time from the perception of your teacher as a buddha. In this manner, make sure that your faith and respect toward your spiritual teacher remain undiminished. Furthermore, with the thought "This mind training [teaching] represents the quintessence of Mahayana and is like a potent seed of buddhahood," engage in this incomparable practice. Thus make sure your enthusiasm for mind training remains undiminished. As for the pledges of the Great and Lesser vehicles you have taken, [75] you should, by sailing the great ship of shame and conscientiousness, which are the [true] antidotes, learn to guard them undiminished, not tainted by even the slightest infractions.

Be endowed with the three inseparable factors.

Make sure that your body is never divorced from such virtuous acts as offering services to your spiritual teachers, making offerings to the Three Jewels, offering tormas to the Dharma protectors and the elemental spirits,

making prostrations, performing circumambulation, and so on. Make sure that your speech is never divorced from such virtuous acts as reciting [verses on] taking refuge, repeating mantras, and doing recitations. Make sure that your mind is never divorced from the two awakening minds and is endowed with inconceivable courage to vanquish all the conceptualizing afflictions, such as self-cherishing. In brief, make sure your body, speech, and mind are never divorced from virtuous activity at all times.

Train constantly toward the chosen objects.

It is stated that being angry and vengeful toward enemies and adversaries who are right there in your presence comes about on the basis of frequent interactions.²³⁸ Thus, from one angle, there is a real risk of losing your mind training in relation to those who simply appear repulsive, those who harbor ill-will against you even though you have caused them no harm, and those you find undesirable even though they harbor no ill-will toward you. Therefore single these people out for special focus, and train your mind by perceiving them as parts of your own heart. Furthermore, because your spiritual teachers, parents, and bodhisattvas are objects of special significance—the fruitional effects are inconceivably [grave] if you accumulate negative karma in relation to them—single them out [for special focus] and engage in the training.

Do not depend on other conditions.

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

Engage in the principal practices right now.

Since beginningless time you have roamed in the three lower realms of existence as if it were your ancestral home. Today, at this juncture, [76] when

you have obtained the human existence of leisure and opportunity that is so rarely found in even a billion eons, instead of making all kinds of plans for this life, it is more important to engage in Dharma practice that aims for [the welfare of] future lives. Of the two aspects of Dharma, exposition and practice, the latter is more important. Compared to all other meditative practices, the practice of training in the awakening mind is more important. Compared to training [the mind] by applying the [two] paddles of scripture and reasoning, it is more important to persistently train in applying the appropriate antidotes on the basis of your teacher's pith instructions. Compared to other activities, training by remaining seated on your cushion is more important. Compared to avoiding the objects [of your afflictions], it is more important to probe within. It is critical for you to train in these points.

Do not apply misplaced understanding.

This refers to the avoidance of six misplaced understandings. If, instead of enduring the hardships entailed in Dharma practice, you forbear difficulties when seeking the objects of your desire, nurturing your friends, and subduing your foes—this is *misplaced forbearance*. If, instead of aspiring to purify your negative karma as much as you can, accumulate merit as much as you can, and strive to transform your thoughts as much as you can, you view the excellences of this life as admirable qualities and aspire to them—this is *misplaced aspiration*. If, instead of savoring your experience of the Dharma through striving in learning, reflection, and meditation, you savor the taste of sensual desire and pursue it and you dwell on and relish memories of past sexual experiences and triumphs over enemies—this is *misplaced savoring*. If, instead of cultivating compassion for those caught in suffering and its conditions, you have compassion for those who undergo sufferings as part of their ascetic life and meditative pursuits—this is *misplaced compassion*. If, instead of cultivating dedication to Dharma practice as a privilege, you have a sense of dedication to such endeavors as accumulating material wealth, nurturing friends, and pursuing mundane greatness—this is *misplaced dedication*. If, instead of rejoicing in those—from the buddhas to the sentient beings—who engage in virtue and enjoy its fruit, happiness, you rejoice when misfortunes and disasters befall your adversaries—this is *misplaced rejoicing*. You should relate to these six misplaced understandings with [appropriate] avoidance and affirmation.

Do not be sporadic.

At times you practice mind training while at others you engage in mantra repetitions; on some occasions you forsake both, yet on other occasions you guard both. Relinquish such a sporadic approach. Forsake also such sporadic approaches as sometimes making plans for this mundane life [77] and increasing negative karma and afflictions, and sometimes engaging in Dharma practice for the sake of your future life. Without being sporadic, engage in Dharma practice with single-pointed dedication. In particular, practice mind training, for mind training is the innermost essence of Dharma practice.

Train with decisiveness.

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

Be released through the two: investigation and close analysis.

[First] investigate which affliction is most dominant in your mind and earnestly apply its specific antidote, striving hard to subdue the affliction. Then analyze the way deluded mental projections arise in relation to the objects that act as their bases. By applying the antidotes, you reduce the force of the afflictions or prevent their arising. By repeatedly thinking “From here on I will never allow my mindstream to be tainted by these afflictions,” you cultivate familiarity with the protective armor for the future. Thus, with these twin methods for applying antidotes to past and future [afflictions], strive diligently to eliminate the afflictions.²³⁹

Do not boast of your good deeds.²⁴⁰

Don’t be boastful and arrogant toward others on any grounds, suggesting,

for example, that another person is indebted to you, or that you engage in certain spiritual practices, or that you are learned, or that you are industrious in your ethical discipline, or that you are great, or that your family lineage is excellent. Radrengpa has said, "Don't place too much hope in humans; supplicate the gods instead."²⁴¹ In any case, if you have correctly distinguished between enemy and friend, you understand everyone to be a friend. Then [even] when you work for others' welfare, the jaundice of self-centeredness does not arise. Instead you recognize all such tasks as obligations, so boastfulness toward others simply does not occur. At this point your mind has become trained.

Do not be ill-tempered.

Whatever others may have done to you in the past, such as humiliating you or verbally abusing you, the blame lies within yourself. Do not react to others with contorted facial expressions or abusive words. [78] Even with your mind, restrain yourself from ill-temperedness. Because your Dharma practice has not yet become an antidote to self-grasping, your resilience is at present weak, and you are volatile due to ill-temperedness. Since such behavior makes your Dharma practice ineffective, ensure that [your Dharma practice] becomes an antidote to self-grasping.

Do not be fickle.

This means not displaying erratic responses to every situation out of a transient temperament. This causes great inconvenience to your companions and must therefore be relinquished.

Do not be boisterous.

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

In this manner you should train, your entire life, in the two awakening minds by means of both meditative sessions and practices in the subsequent periods. There will [then] be no basis for dispute and no reason for conflict *with the gods, demons, or your fellow humans. By making the gods at peace,*

the serpentine nāgas tranquil, and everyone happy as best as possible, when your last breath approaches, you will experience the beginning of [true] happiness, and you will turn your back on misery and travel from light to light, from joy to joy.

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

**Through this proliferation of the five degenerations,
Transform [every event] into the path of enlightenment.**

Generally speaking, the teaching of Buddha Śākyamuni emerged during an era when the five degenerations were on the rise. In particular, it has emerged during this present age, the era of the last five-hundred-year cycle, when the degenerations are even more severe than the five degenerations. Because of this, sentient beings have only afflictions in their thoughts and only negative karma for their actions. They relish when others suffer and feel anguished when others are fortunate. So with all three doors—body, speech, and mind—sentient beings indulge only in deeds that are harmful to others. It is [therefore] an era when [harmful] sentient beings have gathered. Furthermore, those nonhuman agents that admire the positive white force have departed to the pure realms to benefit the bodhisattvas, whereas the strength and force of those who admire the dark side have increased. Because of this, misfortunes plague sentient beings.

Today, therefore, a multitude of adverse conditions cause all kinds of suffering for sentient beings, [79] and myriad obstacles particularly befall those who put the doctrine into practice. So at this time, when adverse conditions compete to form a thicket, if you do not train in this spiritual practice, though you may enter other systems of practice, you will fail to succeed in Dharma practice. By entering this practice and striving in it [on the other hand], you will transform all adverse conditions into factors conducive for training on the path to enlightenment.

As for other benefits, a year's pursuit of virtuous activities during this age—when the teachings of the Buddha face hostile threats—will help accomplish the accumulations better than eons pursuing virtuous activities in the pure realms. Therefore, those capable of training the mind are not vulnerable to the proliferation of the five degenerations and remain contented. If you know how to train the mind, even your body, the body of a mind training yogi, is known as the “city that is a source of joy.” For all happiness—of this and future lives, of self and others—comes about on the basis of this very body.

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

To illustrate these points in a definitive formulation, the author²⁴² himself wrote the following lines:

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

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

Colophon

These words of my teacher, an ocean of goodness delighting
everyone—
Through the merit of compiling them with a wish to help others
May the [giant] elephant of mind training carry all beings
And demolish the solid mountain of egoistic view.

As the rays of your fame pervade all directions,
Like a magnet pulling forth [all] iron objects, [80]
Stirred by your fame, [disciples] remain in your presence;
They've beheld your face so rare and have accomplished great aims.

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

O, those who wish to relinquish the sufferings of self and others—
Forsake the inferior paths described as incomplete
And enter this horse-drawn carriage path of the conqueror's supreme
children.²⁴³

How can anyone hope to become enlightened without this?
[Extracted] from the distillation of all scriptures,
This innermost essence of Kadam is most amazing!

Sarva śubham