

The Fifty-nine Aphorisms of Mind Training

Seven Points of Training the Mind: The Root Text¹

ONE: The preliminaries, which are the basis for dharma practice

1. First, train/study² in the preliminaries.

TWO: The main practice, which is training
in bodhicitta

Absolute Bodhicitta

2. Regard all dharmas³ as dreams.
3. Examine/analyze the nature of unborn awareness (the unborn nature of awareness)⁴.
4. Self-liberate even the antidote. (The antidote will vanish of itself)⁵.
5. Rest in the nature of alaya⁶, the essence/rest the mind in its natural state. (The nature of the path rests in the alaya⁷.
6. In post-meditation, be like a magician [a child of illusion]. (In post-meditation, consider phenomena as illusory.)⁸

¹ This root text is derived from three sources: 1) A text translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee under the direction of Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche; 2) Traleq Kyabgon Rinpoche, *The Benevolent Mind*, a manual of Mind Training. Auckland, Zhyisil Chokyi Ghatsal Publications, 2003; and 3) Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (DKR), Root Text, in *Enlightened Courage: An Explanation of the Seven-Point Mind Training*. Ithaca, Snow Lion, 2006.

² Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (DKR), Root Text, in *Enlightened Courage: An Explanation of the Seven-Point Mind Training*

³ phenomena (DKR), Root Text

⁴ DKR, Root Text

⁵ Root text (DKR)

⁶ Alaya- (Skt.). In the Buddhist tradition it is the eighth level of consciousness. Also called the *fundamental store-house consciousness* which encompasses, is the basis of the consciousness of the five senses, the concept mind (mind door) and taints-habit patterns of the mind.

⁷ Root Text (DKR)

⁸ Root Text (DKR)

Relative Bodhicitta

7. Sending and taking should be practiced alternately. (train to give and take alternatively).⁹ These two should ride/mount ride on the breath.¹⁰
8. Three objects, three poisons, three roots of virtue.¹¹
9. In all activities, train with slogans/actions of words.
10. Begin the sequence of sending and taking with yourself.

THREE: Transformation of Bad Circumstances into the Way of Enlightenment

11. When the world is filled with evil (dissatisfaction), transform all mishaps into the path of Bodhi.
12. Drive all blames into one.¹²
13. Be grateful to everyone/and everything. (Reflect upon the kindness of all beings.)¹³
14. Seeing confusion (phenomenal experience) as the four kayas is unsurpassable shunyata protection.¹⁴ (Voidness is the unsurpassed protection; Thereby illusory appearance is seen as the four kayas.)¹⁵

⁹ Root Text (DKR)

¹⁰ *Tonglen* practice.

¹¹ Three objects (pleasant, unpleasant and neutral (dull), three poisons (greed, hatred and delusion), three roots of virtue (generosity, loving-kindness and wisdom).

¹² The sole issue is clinging and attachment to phenomena.

¹³ DKR. Enlightenment depends on all beings, all have been our parents. Buddha Sakyamuni was so kind. Vast virtue of sentient beings.

¹⁴ The word *śūnyatā* (Skt.) is often translated as emptiness. Prior to the use of the word emptiness it was common to see the word voidness used. Emptiness is only one of many possible translations and it has caused some confusion and negativity amongst both Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. Although emptiness is a good or close translation it has negative connotations in many cultures and in the fields of psychology, psychotherapy, and through western culture. Emptiness can be a good translation choice as it fulfills the classic meaning: to be *empty* of the six poisons (greed, hatred, delusion, pride, jealousy and ignorance) — a traditional definition of Liberation. Or empty of all taints of bewilderment. And, in addition, emptying out of self referencing, clinging, and an absence of confusion about reality. At the same time emptying of the taints and poisons occurs, there is growth and filling up (*śūna*) of a limitless potential of the finest of compassionate qualities; the qualities of Buddha-nature. To include the best of all possible meanings, such as — empty yet swollen, naked yet full, empty yet fully aware, empty and compassionate — it might be advantageous to only use the Sanskrit word *śūnyatā* and let it be slowly, like so many other words from other cultures, incorporated into Western languages. In the Vajrayana/Tantrayana emphasis is placed on the non-dual nature of compassion-*śūnyatā*. The very nature of primordial mind is *Dharmakāya*, free of all elaboration and concepts, even of a concept about Buddha-nature; its display/luminosity/clarity is *Sambhogakāya* and its physical manifestation is *Nirmanakāya*. All three are identical in nature and all three are always present in each Buddha-kāya.

¹⁵ DKR

15. Four practices are the best of methods.¹⁶

16. Whatever you meet unexpectedly, join with meditation¹⁷ [work with whatever you encounter immediately].

FOUR: Showing the Utilization of Practice in One's Whole Life

17. Practice the five strengths/powers, the condensed heart instructions.¹⁸

18. The Mahayana instruction for ejection of consciousness at death is the five strengths/powers: how you conduct yourself is important.

FIVE: Evaluation of Mind Training

19. All dharma agrees at one point/ All Dharmas espouse the same subject.¹⁹

20. Of the two witnesses, hold the principal one.²⁰

21. Always maintain only a joyful mind.

22. If you can practice even when distracted, you are well trained.

SIX: Disciplines of Mind Training

23. Always abide by the three basic principles.²¹ (Always train in the three common points.)²²

24. Change you attitude, but remain natural.

25. Don't talk about injured limbs.²³

26. Don't ponder others/the affairs of others.

¹⁶ Accumulate merit, confession of negativities, offering tormas (Tib.), Skt. *ball*), offering tormas to Dharma protectors.

¹⁷ The practice of *Tonglen* (sending and receiving on the breath).

¹⁸ 1) strong impetus to mind, 2) force of familiarization, 3) ethical seeds, 4) force of abandoning ego cherishing thoughts and 5) force of aspiration.

¹⁹ The taming of ego-clinging, or the training is meaningless.

²⁰ Do not rely on the judgements of ordinary people, but principally rely on the testimony of one's mind.

²¹ Lojong is a lifetime commitment, prevent distortions to the practice, not practice partiality. Hold to the precepts one has taken of Hinayana, Mahayana or Vajrayana vehicles. Refrain from scandalous acts, which includes harm to environment or others. Hold no bias in mind training, such as where, when or how.

²² (DKR): 1) Consistency in Mind Training, all vehicles, drawn together into a single way of life. All vows with equal attention. Not neglect lesser commitments. 2) Not being affected. Our words should correspond with the actual way we practice Dharma. Don't do weird spiritual affected numbers, showing off or pretending. 3) No double standards (towards any type of being, higher or lower). Don't give special treatment to god like beings and nothing to others. Love and compassion to all beings.

²³ Don't discuss unpleasant subjects about other's bodies or minds, such as handicaps and spiritual faults.

27. Work with the greatest defilements first.
28. Abandon any hope of fruition/results.
29. Abandon poisonous food.²⁴
30. Don't be so predictable/good nature.
31. Don't malign others/not to get enraged.
32. Don't wait in ambush (take revenge).
33. Don't bring things to a painful point/don't attack others vulnerable points.
34. Don't transfer the ox's load to the cow, or a horse's load onto a pony/
inappropriateness of loading people with too much.
35. Don't try to be the fastest/or aim to win, or seek attention, fame and
scheming.
36. Don't act with a twist/don't covet praise.
37. Don't make gods into demons (gain in pride and arrogance while practicing
Dharma).
38. Don't seek others' pain as the limbs of your own happiness.

SEVEN: Guidelines of Mind Training

39. All activities should be done with one intention.²⁵
40. Correct all wrongs with one intention.
41. Two activities: one at the beginning, one at the end.²⁶
42. Whichever of the two (good or bad) occurs, be patient.
43. Observe these two, even at the risk of your life.²⁷
44. Train in the three difficulties.²⁸
45. Take on the three principal causes.²⁹
46. Pay heed that the three never wane/not diminish.³⁰
47. Keep the three inseparable/three non-separations.³¹
48. Train without bias in all areas. It is crucial always to do this pervasively
and wholeheartedly.

²⁴ Including poisonous (harmful) food, but also the poison of attachment and clinging and not seeing the illusory nature of phenomena.

²⁵ relative and absolute compassion.

²⁶ Wake up with awareness, review before sleeping.

²⁷ What to cultivate, what not to cultivate & Lojong practice.

²⁸ Conflicting emotions: identify and recognize, overcoming, transforming.

²⁹ Teacher, receive appropriate instructions, supportive environment.

³⁰ Humility, Lojong practice and learning.

³¹ Body, speech and mind.

49. Always meditate on whatever provokes resentment/always meditate on difficult points.
50. Don't be swayed by external circumstances.
51. This time, practice the main points/main practice.
52. Don't misinterpret/avoid misunderstandings.
53. Don't vacillate.
54. Train wholeheartedly/with courage.
55. Liberate yourself by examining and analyzing/investigating.
56. Don't wallow in self-pity/don't expect indebtedness
57. Don't be jealous/impulsive.
58. Don't be frivolous/fickle.
59. Don't expect applause/publicity.

Edited by Lama Yongdu Gyaltzen, Dharma Centre of Canada, September 2014, for Lho Ontul Rinpoche's teachings on Lojong. Ontul Rinpoche taught from the text by Jamgon Kongtrul: Ken McLeod (translator). *The Great Path of Awakening: The Classic Guide to Lojong, a Tibetan Buddhist Practice for Cultivating the Heart of Compassion*. Boston, Shambhala, 2005. These fifty-nine aphorisms are attributed to the 12th century Tibetan Lama Chekawa Yeshe Dorje and based on teachings from the 10th century Indian saint Atisha and his Sumatran teacher Dharmaraksita.