

## TRANSFORMING THE MIND IN SEVEN POINTS: THE ROOT TEXT

(Edited with italicized comments by Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo (1878-1941);

headings underlined and notes in parentheses by translator, Joe Loizzo, M.D., Ph.D.)

### 0) Dedication

*To show the authenticity of this teaching,*

*Atisha honors his mentor, who embodied great compassion:*

Homage to Great Compassion!

This essential nectar of precepts

Was transmitted from Suvarnavipa.

*To highlight the value of this teaching, its benefits are explained:*

It resembles the sun, a diamond and a medicinal tree

(In that it shines on all, cuts the hardest suffering, and is useful in every part).

The purpose and (benefit) of understanding (this) text

Is to turn the evolution of the five (mind/body systems) poisoned (by stress and trauma)

Into a path to (compassionate) enlightenment!

### 1) Relying on the Preliminaries

*For the actual teaching, the first of the seven topics is building a basic contemplative practice:*

First learn the preliminaries (of slowing, stopping, and reversing the cycle of stress and

trauma, by renouncing reified notions of self and world, stress emotions like shame,

fear, and rage, along with the primitive self-protective instincts driving them, addictive

craving, compulsive habits of mere survival, and the repetitive cycle of living from crisis

to crisis, trauma to trauma).

## 2a) Cultivating the Emotional Spirit of Compassion

*Regarding the second point, the actual (practice) of building empathy, love, and compassion, there are two (sides of the coin): the emotional art of building compassion; and the intuitive art of building openness. We begin with the emotional spirit of love and compassion:*

(First) drive all blame into one: (your traumatic self-habit),

(Then) contemplate the kindness of all living beings (near and far).

Practice combining both giving (love) and taking (care).

Start gradually with taking on your own (suffering,

Next give yourself love, then take care and give love to others, one at a time).

Mount these two on the (out and in) breath

(Breathing in suffering with care, breathing out equanimity with love).

(Monitoring) the three objects, three poisons and three roots of virtue

Is the brief precept for the aftermath (in between meditations:

Stop controlling loved ones, ignoring strangers, and resenting enemies,

Start releasing loved ones, embracing strangers, and accepting enemies).

To foster mindfulness of this (teaching),

Practice in all you do with (the help of these mnemonic) phrases.

## 2b) Cultivating the Intuitive Spirit of Openness

After reaching (emotional) stability, discover the secret (of radical openness).

Consider the dream-like (nature) of (all) things.

Examine the uncreated (symbol-free) nature of mind.

Even the remedy (of openness) itself is objectively free (of fixed self or bias).

The actuality of the path rests in the fundamental realm (of sheer openness).

Between sessions, act as an illusory being: (the most loving, caring version of you).

### 3) Turning Adversity to Advantage

*The third (point) is transforming adversity into a path to compassionate openness:*

When the environment and (all) life are poisoned with vicious (habits),

Turn adversity into the path to (shared) enlightenment.

Apply meditation to whatever (eventuality) comes.

The best method is (to practice) with four preparations:

(Self-correction, cultivating virtues, building generosity, and extending basic trust).

### 4) Integrating the Lifelong Practice

*The fourth (point) is the explanation of rounding out the practice of a single lifetime:*

To distill the essence of (these) precepts

You must apply them with the five powers:

(Equalizing self and other, disarming your traumatic self-habit, planting seeds of positivity and openness, nurturing their growth, and persisting through every block).

(As) the universal teaching on transference (of love to the next generation) is

These same five powers, their practice is vital.

### 5) Measuring Success on the Path

*The fifth (point) is learning to measure how clear is your mind:*

All teachings coalesce in a single intentionality.

Of the two (kinds of) witness, (inner and outer), hold the (inner as) primary.

Always rely exclusively on the happy mind.

The measure of having learned is the elimination (of mental and emotional blocks).

The mark of having learned is being endowed with five kinds of munificence:

(The five types of altruistic genius: moral, social, creative, executive, and critical).

When adept despite distractions, you have (finally) learned.

## 6) The (Eighteen) Commitments of Clearing the Mind

*The sixth (point) is explaining the commitments of clearing the mind:*

Always reflect on three (grounding) principles:

(Humility, integrity and impartiality).

Transform your intent but stay as you are.

Don't mention (others') handicaps.

Don't even think about the limitations of others.

Purify your worst addiction first.

Give up any expectation of results.

Give up your diet of poison(ous habits).

Don't indulge self-righteousness.

Don't react to insults.

Don't wait in ambush.

Don't go for the jugular.

Don't put your burden on others.

Don't harbor false views.

Don't aim for the top of the heap.

Don't make your genius a demon.

Don't seek satisfaction in the miseries (of others).

## 7) The (Twenty-Two) Pledges of Clearing the Mind

*The seventh (point) is explaining the pledges of clearing the mind:*

Practice all yogas as one: (the art of compassionate openness).

Subdue all resistance with one (art: taking care and giving love on the breath).

At the start and finish (of each day, do) both the two actions:

(Initial positive motivation, and final correction/dedication).

Tolerate both (good and bad), whatever comes.

Guard both (these and your other) pledges as your life.

Master the three hardest (challenges):

(To expose, ameliorate and eliminate what blocks an open heart and mind).

Nurture the three principal roots: (wise aspiration, pure devotion, full preparation).

Cultivate three things tirelessly: (trust, effort and wisdom).

Make yourself triply inseparable (from the practice):

(In body, speech and mind).

Practice perfect impartiality towards objects (of clinging, aversion, and indifference).

It is vital to learn profoundly and all-inclusively.

Meditate constantly on special cases: (intimates, enemies, and the disagreeable).

Don't depend on external conditions.

Take up the principal (practice) right now.

Don't be wrong-headed.

Don't be erratic.

Learn decisively.

Break free with both investigation and analysis.

Don't boast about practice.

Don't indulge frustration.

Don't be temperamental.

Don't expect thanks.

### Conclusion

*(Chekhawa) concludes by proclaiming his realization of unconditional love and compassion:*

Because of my many aspirations,

I put an end to the tragedy of suffering,

And received these precepts to tame the (reactive) self-habit;

Now (at last) I can die without regrets.

So (ends) the root text of Bodhisattva Chekhawa's *Transforming the Mind in Seven Points*, based on the oral transmission from Atisha and Dharmaraksita. It was composed by the incarnate (lama) named Pabongka in the year of the pig, in the pure land where the waters converge at Jampaling (Monastery), when, inspired by just completing his commentary on (Tsong Khapa's) Great Stages of the Path to Enlightenment (called Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand), he was entreated by (his student) the Lamrim Master Phun-tshogs Paldan. He compiled this edition of the text through detailed study of the many texts and commentaries, and, at the same time, composed a topical outline as an ornament. May they bring benefit to all living beings!

Colophon: This *Root Text of the Universal (Practice of) Transforming the Mind in Seven Points* (*Thegs-po'i blo-'byong don bdun-ma rtsa-ba*) composed by Geshe Chekawa Yeshe Dorje (1101-75) was translated from the edition compiled by the Geluk Master Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo (1878-1941) by Joe Loizzo, M.D., for the Nalanda Institute Class, *The Gradual Path of Clearing the Mind*, in the Spring of 2009. It was revised for the Nalanda Four Year Program Class, *Clearing the Mind*, in the Spring of 2012, and again for the Nalanda Workshop on *Healthy Intimacy*, taught by Geri and Joe Loizzo, in the Spring of 2013.