



Course XIV  
Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

*Answer Key, Class One*

1) The Tibetan word *lojong* (*blo-sbyong*) has been translated into English as "mental training." State a reference by an eminent Lama to the famous *lojong* in eight verses which gives insight into another way of translating this word. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**The first Changkya Rinpoche, Ngawang Lobsang Chunden, was a former life of Pabongka Rinpoche who lived 1642-1714, and who served as the Lama of the Emperor of China. He refers to the *lojong* (*blo-sbyong*) in eight verses as "advices in developing (*sbyong*) the mind (*sems* or *blo*) of enlightenment," or "the good heart."**

སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་གྲུང་རི་ཐང་པ་དོ་རྗེ་སངས་གཤམ་མཛད་པའི་བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་

སྐྱོང་གི་གདམས་པ་ཚོ་བཞུད་མར་གྲགས་པ།

*sempa chenpo langri tangpa dorje sengge dzepay jangchub semjong gi  
dampa tsikgye mar drakpa*

2) What text will serve as the source of most of the *lojong* works which we will be studying? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**The source will be *A Compendium of Texts on Developing the Good Heart*, compiled by the great bodhisattva Muchen Konchok Gyeltsen (14th century).**

ལྷོ་སྐྱོང་བརྒྱུ་ཙ།

*lojong gyatsa*

ལུས་ཆེན་དགོན་མཚོ་བཞུ་ལ་མཚན།

*muchen konchok gyeltsen*

3) In what sense are other living beings more precious than a gem that could give you anything you wished for?

**We are generally incapable even of imagining the ultimate goal, so if we possessed a gem that gave us anything we wished for, we would not even be able to frame the wish properly.**

4) The line about the wish-giving gem can also be read in a different way. Describe it. (Tibetan track also write the Tibetan here.)

**The grammar of the Tibetan phrase "semchen tamche la, yishin norbu le hlakpay, dun chok druppa" also allows the reading, "reach the ultimate goal, more precious than a wish-giving gem, for the sake of every living being." The point is that the state of enlightenment provides everything we ever wished for.**

སེམ་ཅན་ཐམ་ཅན་ཅད་ལ། ཡིད་བཞིན་ཉོན་ལྷན་ལྷག་པའི། དོན་མཚོན་སྐྱབ་པ།  
*semchen tamche la, yishin norbu le hlakpay, dun chok druppa*

5) What is a good way of avoiding the negative thought of low self-esteem and still practice the instructions of the second of the eight verses?

**We can view others as "being highest" in the sense of being special beings who are here to help us. Because their nature is empty, they can actually become this for us if our virtue is sufficient.**

6) Why does the third verse stress stopping mental afflictions at the very moment they begin?

**Because of the fact that even a few instants of negative mental karma are enough to produce the perception of an entire lower-realm life, we must avoid even these few instants.**

7) Why are bad people described as "hard to find, like a mine of gold"?

**It is very difficult to assemble all the causes that will bring one to total enlightenment. It is only by encountering suffering ourselves, and seeing others tormented by suffering, that we can develop the wish for Enlightenment. Thus we should cherish cruel and suffering people as precious causes for Buddhahood.**



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*Answer Key, Class Two*

1) Whose fault is the current "protector controversy"? How could it be stopped?

**Having to see our Lamas appear to disagree with one another is due only to one reason: our own lack of proper behavior towards our Lamas. If we wish to see it stop, we must honor all of our Lamas carefully, and be very careful not to have any mental afflictions about the current controversy. The real issue is our own past and present behavior towards our Lamas.**

2) If we continue to take the loss in any situation upon ourselves, and continue to give the advantage in any situation to others, what's to stop others from taking advantage of us?

**First of all, our career is to be a bodhisattva; we are pledged to serve others as their servants, and to assure that all their wishes are fulfilled, even at our own expense. Secondly, any real suffering or want that we incur because we have given away what we have to others can only, in karmic terms, have been created by previous incidents *in which we failed to give to others what we had*. This does not however mean that we shouldn't keep others from harming ourselves or anyone else, because *this will hurt them in the future*.**

3) What does the first Changkya Rinpoche have to say about *how* we should take the loss in any situation ourselves?

**He says to make sure that we do it without regret, and with the highest joy.**

4) The root text says, "May none of these be made impure by the eight ideas of things." The phrase "eight ideas of things" can refer to two different sets of things; list these two sets separately below. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

*First way to read the phrase, as referring to: The eight worldly thoughts:*

འཇིག་ཇིན་ཚོས་བརྒྱད།

*jikten chu-gye*

a) Being happy when we acquire something

སྟེན་བཀུར་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།

*nyekur jung na ga*

b) Being unhappy when we don't acquire something

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།

*majung na miga*

c) Being happy when we feel good

བདེ་བ་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།

*dewa jung na ga*

d) Being unhappy when we don't feel good

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།

*majung na miga*

e) Being happy when we become well known

སྟོན་བྲགས་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།

*nyendrak jung na ga*

f) Being unhappy when we don't

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།  
*majung na miga*

g) Being happy when someone speaks well of us

བསྐྱོད་ར་གཏོང་མཁན་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།  
*tura tongken jung na ga*

h) Being unhappy when someone speaks ill of us

སྐད་ར་བྱེད་མཁན་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།  
*mera jeken jung na miga*

*Second way to read the phrase, as referring to: The eight extremes (tagye) which refers to the following eight as they exist from their own side, and not as our own projections (ngowo druppay):*

མཐའ་བརྒྱད།  
*tagye*

ངོ་བོས་བྱུབ་པའི་...  
*ngowu druppay...*

a) Starting

སྐྱེ་བ།  
*kyewa*

b) Stopping

འགག་པ།  
*gakpa*

**c) Unchangable**

རྟམ་པ།  
*takpa*

**d) Stopped altogether**

ཆད་པ།  
*chepa*

**e) Going (in the sense of a seed going or moving into being a sprout)**

འགོ་བ།  
*drowa*

**f) Coming (in the sense of a sprout coming from the destruction of a seed)**

འོང་བ།  
*ongwa*

**g) One thing**

གཅིག་།  
*chik*

**h) Different things**

ཐ་དད།  
*tade*

5) The text says that we can be "free from the chains of attachment." How does Changkya Rinpoche explain this attachment? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**He says it refers to attachment to the extremes of thinking things are the way they seem to be (which implies that they are unchanging and impossible to change) and of thinking that, if things are not the way they seem to be, they cannot exist at all.**

ངོ་བོས་གྲུབ་པའི་དྲཱུཔ་མཐའ་དང་། །གཏན་ནས་མེད་པའི་ཆད་མཐའ་རུ། །ཞིན་  
པའི་འཆིང་བ་ལས་གྲོལ།

*ngowo druppay takta dang, tenne mepay cheta ru, shenpay chingwa le  
drol*



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*Answer Key, Class Three*

1) Give the dates, name several teachers, and identify the lineage of Gyalwa Yang Gunpa, who wrote the *lojong* or instructions on developing a good heart entitled *The Advices of the Victorious One, Yang Gunpa*. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**The dates for Gyalwa Yang Gunpa are 1213-1258. He belonged to the Drukpa line of the Kagyu tradition. Two of his teachers were Gu-tsangpa and the Sakya Pandita.**

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡང་དགོན་པ།

*gyalwa yang gunpa*

འབྲུག་པ།      བཀའ་བརྒྱུད།

*drukpa              kagyu*

གོ་སྐྱོད་ཚང་པ།

*gu tsangpa*

ས་སྐྱེ་པ་ཐེ་ཏ།

*sakya pandita*

2) When Gyalwa Yang Gunpa says that "your own mind is the Buddha," what does he actually mean?

**The mind, in the sense of one's wisdom, has the capacity to take one to Buddhahood. The emptiness of our minds is our Buddha nature, our capacity to become enlightened. Because the mind does not exist from its own side, we can one day be forced by our good karma to see it as the omniscient mind of a Buddha.**



- 3) What does he mean when he says, "Nothing but the Dharma means anything at all; / Throw the rest out like trash. / It all boils down to dying...?"

**Keeping in mind the fact that we must die, thinking that we will die today, enables us to keep our priorities straight, and divide between what is important to do and what is not: between what is Dharma and what is not.**

- 4) Explain the real meaning of the lines, "Whatever comes, make it crystal; / This is the key for making / This life turn to freedom, all by itself."

**The word "crystal" refers generally to emptiness; "whatever comes" means whatever appears to our mind, and also whatever we experience in general. If we can understand the emptiness of ourselves and the world around us, it is nearly an automatic process to collect the virtue we need to turn everything into a world of enlightened beings and paradise. It is not literally true that this could be automatic, or that all objects are emptiness itself.**

- 5) Name the five poisons, and the effects of their opposites. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) liking things ignorantly / every happiness

འདོད་ཆགས།      བདེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད།  
*duchak*              *dewa tamche*

- b) disliking things ignorantly / freedom from all pain

ཞི་སྤང་།      སྦྱག་བསྐྱེལ་དང་བྲལ་བ།  
*shedang*              *dukngel dang drelwa*

- c) being ignorant / reaching matchless Enlightenment

གཉི་སྦྱག      བྱང་རྒྱལ་ཐོབ་པ།  
*timuk*              *jangchub toppa*

**d) feeling pride / standing independent on your own**

ང་རྒྱལ།      རང་མགོ་ཐོན་པ།  
*nga-gyal*      *ranggo tunpa*

**e) feeling jealousy / stopping all obstacles**

སྤྲུལ་དོག་      གོགས་སྐྱམས་ཅད་སེལ་བ།  
*trakdok*      *gek tamche selwa*

6) What does it really mean when Gyalwa Yang Gunpa says, "The reality of things is beyond the mind; so reside in a state where you hold to nothing"?

**He means that a normal state of mind perceiving apparent reality cannot perceive at the same time ultimate reality; and he urges us to stay in a state where we no longer hold anything to exist independent of our own projections, forced upon us by our past karma.**



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*Answer Key, Class Four*

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

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

བཀའ་གདམས་པ་དགོ་བཤེས་མཚན་ཁ་བ། ཡེ་ཤེས་རྗེ།  
*kadampa geshe chekawa, yeshe dorje*

**His name is also sometimes spelled:**

འཚན་ཁ་བ།      མཚན་ཁ་པ།  
*chekawa      chekepa*

**The title in Tibetan is:**

ལྷོ་ལྷོང་དོན་བདུན་མ།  
*lojong dun dunma*

2) Name the person who first taught the points of this practice, and then give some of the principal figures who passed it on until the time it was first taught openly. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The instruction began with Lord Buddha, who passed it on to Maitreya, he to the two brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu, and eventually down to Serlingpa, Lord Atisha, Dromton Je, Potowa, Sharawa, and then finally Chekawa. These names of these holy beings in Tibetan are:

ཐུབ་དབང་།	གུམས་པ།	ཐོགས་མེད་སྐུ་མཚེད།
<i>tubwang</i>	<i>jampa</i>	<i>tokme kuche</i>
གཤམ་རྒྱེད་པ།	རྩོ་བོ་རྗེ།	འབྲོམ་སྟོན་པ།
<i>serlingpa</i>	<i>jowo je</i>	<i>dromtonpa</i>
པོ་ཏོ་བ།	ཤ་ར་བ།	འཆད་ཁ་བ།
<i>potawa</i>	<i>sharawa</i>	<i>chekawa</i>

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

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

4) What are the seven points of this practice? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Instructions on the foundation Dharma, the preliminary practices;

སྟོན་འབྲོ་རྟོན་གྱི་ཚེས་བསྟན་པ།  
*ngundro ten gyi chu tenpa*

- b) The actual practice for developing the Wish for Enlightenment  
bodhichitta;

དངོས་གཞི་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་སྐྱོང་བ།  
*ngushi jangchub kyi sem jongwa*

- c) Learning to use problems as a path to Enlightenment;

ཀྱིན་ངན་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་ལམ་དུ་བྱེད་བ།  
*kyen ngen jangchub kyi lam du kyerwa*

- d) A summary of an entire lifetime's practice;

ཚེ་གཅིག་གི་ཉམས་ལེན་དྲིལ་ནས་བསྐྱེད་པ།  
*tsechik gi nyamlen dril ne tenpa*

- e) The point at which one can say that he or she has successfully  
developed the good heart;

སློའ་འབྱོངས་པའི་ཚད།  
*lojongpay tse*

- f) Pledges to keep for developing the good heart; and

སློའ་སྐྱོང་གི་དམ་ཚིག།  
*lojong gi damtsik*

- g) Certain advices on developing the good heart.

སློའ་སྐྱོང་གི་བསྐྱབ་བྱ།  
*lojong gi labja*

5) Give a brief explanation of each line of the following difficult verse from the root text:

Learn to see all things as a dream;  
Examine the nature of the mind, unborn.  
The antidote itself is gone to is;  
Let it go in the essence, source of all things.

The first line means that we should see all things as empty, which reminds us that the world is a perception forced upon us by our good and bad deeds, and allows us to do the good deeds needed to make this world a paradise and ourselves deathless angels. The second line is to remind us that even our own minds are the same, and we must keep our vows well so we can come to see our own mind as omniscience. The third line states that even the wisdom which perceives that our bodies and minds are empty of any nature of their own is itself empty of any such nature. The fourth line teaches us to carry this understanding even further into a deep meditative state, "letting it go" from faults of meditation and finally from the misperception of things itself, reaching the direct perception of emptiness.

6) What does the text mean when it says, "Inbetween sessions, be a figment of the imagination"?

This is referring to the period after the direct perception of emptiness, called "subsequent wisdom." Here we realize that, even though we have just perceived ultimate reality directly, once we come out of this state we are again seeing things in a mistaken way, as having a nature from their own side, and will continue to do so until we reach nirvana. This is the ultimate meaning of "illusion" in Buddhism.

ཇེས་ཐོབ་ཡི་ཤིང་།

*jetob yeshe*

7) What are the "the three objects, three poisons, and three stores of virtue"? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The three objects are things which are attractive, repulsive, and in between. The three poisons that normally come from focusing upon them are ignorant liking, ignorant disliking, and ignorance itself. The three stores of virtue are to become free of the three poisons by resolving to take upon oneself all the pain and causes that others are experiencing and creating due to the three poisons themselves.

ཡུལ་ཡིད་དུ་འོང་མི་འོང་བར་མ་གསུམ།

*yul yi-du ong mi-ong barma sum*

ཆགས་སྣང་གཏི་མུག་གསུམ།

*chak dang timuk sum*

ཆགས་སྣང་གཏི་མུག་མིད་པའི་དགོ་ཚུ་གསུམ།

*chak dang timuk mepay getsa sum*

8) Explain the following difficult lines from the root text:

See the deception as being four bodies;  
Emptiness is the matchless protector.

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



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*Answer Key, Class Five*

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

**The five powers:**

སྟོབས་ལྔ།

*top nga*

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

འཕན་པ།

*penpa*

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

གོམས་པ།

*gompa*

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

དཀར་པོ་ས་བོན།

*karmo sabun*



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

སུན་འབྱིན་པ།

*sunjinpa*

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

སྨོན་ལམ།

*munlam*

2) The two lines that come next in the root text are: "In the great way these same five are the advices/For sending your mind; cherish the act." Name the spiritual practice that these lines refer to, and then explain each word of the two lines briefly. (Tibetan track name the practice in Tibetan and explain the lines in English.)

**This refers to how one should perform the practice of transferring one's consciousness (*powa*), or sending one's mind into death. The bodhisattva's way (the "great way") of performing this practice is higher than any other way, and involves the same five powers, but with a new sense to each of them, as follows:**

འཕོ་བ།

*powa*

- a) **resolutions for the future: deciding that, as you die, and further on in the intermediate state and elsewhere, you will never lose the attitude of the Wish for enlightenment**
- b) **accustoming yourself: this is the most important of all; to be so accustomed to thinking as a bodhisattva that, as you die, you continue to have constant thoughts about wishing to reach enlightenment for the sake of others**
- c) **pure white seeds: offering, as you die, everything you possess freely to both higher beings and to the benefit of suffering ones; dedicating everything you had without any feeling of possessiveness, and especially feeling no attachment to your body as you die**

d) **destruction: confessing, as you die, all the negative things you have ever done; deciding that from then on you will never do them again; and, if you are a practitioner of the secret teachings, renewing your vows by entering into the secret world yourself, or taking a new empowerment, in your final hours**

e) **prayer: to pray not that you yourself might go to a Buddha realm, but rather that in dying you could take on all the pain and bad deeds and spiritual obstacles of other living beings; and to pray as well that you might be able to reach the real Wish for enlightenment**

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

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

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

ངས་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་དོན་དུ་མཉམ་མེད་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་སྣོན་པར་བྱས་ཀྱང་།

མི་འགྲོ་བར་འདུག། །དག་ཞིང་གི་སྣང་བ་ཤར་བུང་།

*nga semchen tamche kyi dondu narne du drowar munpar je kyang,  
min-drowar duk, dak shing gi nangwa shar jung*

4) Explain, one by one, the next four lines of the root text, briefly:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Course XIV  
Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

*Answer Key, Class Six*

1) Who wrote the original root text of "Freedom from the Four Attachments"; what are his dates, and what is the name of the illustrious group to which he belongs? (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan, and also give the name of the text in Tibetan.)

**The author of the original root text was Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, who lived 1092-1158. He was one of the Five Patriarchs of the Sakyas. The name of the text in Tibetan is *Shenpa Shidrel*.**

ས་ཚེན་གུན་དགའ་སྡིང་པོ།

*sachen kunga nyinpo*

ས་སྐྱ་གོང་མ་ནམ་གྲ།

*sakya gongma nam nga*

ཞེན་པ་བཞི་བྲལ།

*shenpa shi drel*

2) Name the author of the explanation of this text that we will be reading for our study of "Freedom from the Four Attachments," and give his dates. Who was his nephew, and who was his nephew's nephew? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**The author of this explanation is Jetsun Drakpa Gyeltsen, who lived 1147-1216. His nephew was the Sakya Pandita, Kunga Gyeltsen (1182-1251), and the Sakya Pandita's nephew was Drogun Chugyal Pakpa (1235-1280), who brought Buddhism to the Mongolians.**

ཇེ་བུ་འཇམ་གཏན་པོ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

*jetsun drakpa gyeltsen*

ས་སྐྱ་པཎྜི་ཏ་ཀུན་དགའ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

*sakya pandita kunga gyeltsen*

འགྲོ་དགོན་ཚེས་རྒྱལ་འཕགས་པ།

*drogun chugyal pakpa*

3) Write the famous verse of "Freedom from the Four Attachments." (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- A person who is still attached to this life is no Dharma practitioner.
- A person who is still attached to the three worlds has no renunciation.
- A person who is still attached to getting what they want is no bodhisattva.
- A person who still grasps to things has no worldview.

ཚེ་འདི་ལ་ཞེན་ན་ཚེས་པ་མིན།

ཁམས་གསུམ་ལ་ཞེན་ན་ངེས་འབྱུང་མིན།

འབདག་དོན་ལ་ཞེན་ན་བྱང་སེམས་མིན།

འཇིན་པ་བྱང་ན་ལྟ་བ་མིན།

*tсен di la shen na chupa min,*  
*kam sum la shen na ngenjung min,*  
*dak dun la shen na jangsem min,*  
*dzinpa jung na tazwa min,*

4) The holy lama Drakpa Gyeltsen describes "attachment to this life" as attachment to one's practice of the ethical life, and to one's learning, contemplation, and meditation. Explain the real meaning of attachment to one's practice of the ethical life.

It means to practice one's ethics out of attachment to one's instincts; to what feels good; to what one's parents or school teachers or religious instructors early in life said, without examining it; to what one's culture has ingrained one to think; to what one's peers say; to what is legal or not; rather than out of a well-reasoned understanding of emptiness and karma.

5) The Sakya Pandita uses four metaphors for the four attachments. State them and explain them briefly.

- a) **This life is like a bubble; if you are not attached to it, you don't go to the lower realms; the antidote is to meditate every hour on your death; the result of this antidote is that your Dharma practice becomes Dharma.**
- b) **Attachment to the three realms is like eating poison; it tastes good in the short run and hurts you in the long run; the antidote is to think of the problems of the vicious circle; the result of this antidote is that your Dharma practice becomes a path.**
- c) **Attachment to what you want is like killing your enemy's son; it makes you glad in the short run and in the end is certain to bring you harm; the antidote is the Wish for enlightenment (bodhichitta); and the result of this antidote is to remove from your practice the first great mistake of the path, which is just practicing it for yourself.**
- d) **A person who still grasps to things as being self-existent is like believing that a mirage is rain water; it seems like water in the short run but you can't drink it. It keeps you from reaching enlightenment quickly. The antidote is to avoid the second great mistake of the path, which is holding to the two extremes: that things must exist as they seem, and that if they don't exist as they seem they cannot exist at all. The result is that you are able to transform your present mistaken state of mind into the mind of an enlightened being.**



Course XIV  
Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

*Answer Key, Class Seven*

1) In discussing why one should not be attached to the three realms, the holy lama Drakpa Gyeltsen mentions the "pain of pain," and describes the sufferings of the three lower realms. Name these three realms, describe where they are, and explain how one takes birth in these realms. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan, then describe and explain in English.)

**The three lower realms are the realms of animals, tormented spirits, and hell-beings. Ultimately these are located wherever the mind is located and is forced by one's own past karma to perceive them. One becomes a being in the lower realms *by perceiving the world as one of these beings*; to perceive the objects in one's world in the way that a dog perceives them *is what it is* to be a dog.**

ངན་སོང་གསུམ།

*ngensong sum*

དུད་འགྲོ།

*dundro*

ཡི་དྲགས།

*yidak*

དབྱུལ་བ།

*nyelwa*

2) Describe a quotation from Lord Buddha himself to support this presentation of the lower realms, also giving the name of the sutra from which it comes. (Tibetan track describe in English and name the sutra in Tibetan.)

**The *Sutra Requested by Upali* states that the three lower realms, and the higher realms and paradises as well, are all only the result of our projections. No one ever came and built them there, like some universal construction company. He says, "The whole world is a projection/That comes only from your projections." This of course does not at all mean that the suffering in these realms is anything less than completely real.**

ཉི་བར་འཁོར་གྱིས་ལྷས་པའི་མདོ།

*nyewarkor gyi shupay do*

3) Explain what drives the suffering of change; what makes every single good thing in our life go bad, unless we practice the Dharma with knowledge.

**It's not that things change external to ourselves, from their sides; our own minds undergo a shift in perception, forced upon us by our karma, and we see ourselves lose those things which are dear to us.**

4) When the holy lama Drakpa Gyeltsen speaks of "the mystic power of this good deed," what good deed is he referring to; where does its power come from; and how could it ever enlighten all beings?

**He is speaking of the idea of praying that all the pain of the three realms could ripen upon us. The power comes from the extraordinary karma of overcoming our tendency to cherish ourselves and care for others first. It enlightens all beings only by helping us to reach enlightenment quickly ourselves, and then guide others to this same state.**

5) What reasoning can we use to decide whether the people and experiences from the earlier part of our life were somehow spiritually significant?

**You can call this idea spiritual revisionism. From their own side, the events and people from the earlier part of our life have no nature of being spiritually significant or not. As we become more pure though, we begin to perceive them in a different way, as very special spiritually; which although not independently true, is nonetheless completely valid, as valid as the perception that they are just ordinary.**





Course XIV  
Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

*Answer Key, Class Eight*

1) Name the person who wrote out the *lojong* or instructions for developing the good heart named "Wheel of Knives." Give also his approximate dates, and name the person to whom he gave this work as a teaching. (Tibetan track name the two people, and give the title of the text, in Tibetan.)

**The work was written down by the Indian master Dharma Rakshita and presented to Lord Atisha (982-1052) as a teaching. The title in Tibetan is *Tsoncha Korlo*, and the author and his student's names in Tibetan are *Dharma Rakshita* and *Jowoje*.**

མཚོན་ཆ་འཁོར་ལོ།

*tsoncha korlo*

ཏཱ་མ་རྣམ་ཏུ།

*dharma rakshita*

ཇོ་བོ་ཇེ།

*jowo je*

2) Give a description of a "wheel of knives," as found for example in the teaching by master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851) on the Stage of Creation for the secret teaching of the angel known as "Frightener" (Bhairava).

**Here a wheel of knives is described as a wheel made of iron, having many spokes made of knives sharpened on both sides of the blades, without any rim around the outside of the wheel. At the center or hub of the wheel is a space that allows you to put your fingers, so you can throw the wheel at someone. So it is sort of a big "ninja star," or perhaps we can think of it as a razor-tipped boomerang.**

3) The text of the "Wheel of Knives" describes how bodhisattvas in the vicious circle of life are like peacocks who actually find poisonous plants more nutritious than medicinal ones. The idea is that the bodhisattvas can transform inner afflictions and outer difficult situations into precious opportunities for personal practice and helping others. Does this also mean that a bodhisattva would try to feel a mental affliction in order to somehow use it for good, or purposely stay in samsara or the vicious circle of suffering, in order to help others?

**All mental afflictions leave negative imprints on our minds that come back to hurt us later; so although when they get a mental affliction bodhisattvas know how to turn it around and learn something from it, they would never purposely get one to do so. Nor would they purposely "stay" in the vicious circle of life, the world of mental affliction and negative karma, for the good of others; rather, they are pledged to reach highest bliss as quickly as possible so they can be of true help to others. To think the other way is a serious mistake, and there is even a bodhisattva vow against doing so; it is included in the secondary offenses.**

4) What state of mind is described as "the henchman of the devil"?

**Grasping for yourself; which in one sense means working only for our own happiness, and in another sense means seeing ourselves as self-existent, as not being a product of our past karma, not being a projection forced on us by what we have thought, spoken, or done in the past.**

5) According to the text, each unpleasant thing or event that ever happens to us is a result of "what goes around comes around": the things we have done to others are returning back to us like a wheel of knives. In the blank next to each of the problems, write the letter of the real cause that the text says brought it about.

- e Those who are supposed to help me hurt me instead.
- g I find myself getting sick a lot.
- c I have different kinds of mental suffering.
- b People around me are bossy.
- a People say unpleasant things to me.
- m Unpleasant things often happen around me.
- l I have trouble finding friends and other people to help me.
- k People act in an intimidating way to me.
- d I feel depressed a lot.
- h Whatever I try to do never seems to work out.
- n No matter what I do, my Lama never seems to be pleased.
- j People seem to criticize everything I do.
- i The people around me can't seem to get along with each other.
- f I have had, or have, some very serious health problems.
- o I tend to get serious headaches or pains in my body.
- p I often feel anxiety or worry.
- r I don't have enough money.
- q I don't look very good physically.
- s I have trouble keeping my spiritual practice regularly and alertly.
- a) I engaged in divisive talk in the past.
- b) I was arrogant towards those less than me in the past.
- c) I upset other people in the past.
- d) In the past, I encouraged other people to do bad deeds.
- e) I failed to keep my mind on goodness in the past.
- f) I misused resources dedicated to the Dharma.
- g) I did harm to the bodies of other people in the past.
- h) I hindered the work of holy beings in the past.
- i) In the past, I wished bad things on others, and split people into sides.
- j) In the past, I displayed a lack of personal conscience and consideration of what others would think of my actions.
- k) In the past, I said bad things about spiritual people.
- l) In the past, I split up other people who were close to each other.
- m) I failed to think of my world and the people in it as special and holy in the past.
- n) In the past I was insincere and hypocritical in my Dharma practice.
- o) I didn't keep my spiritual promises and pledges in the past.
- p) In the past I did wrong deeds against Angels and the secret teachings.
- q) In the past I was an angry person, and didn't make holy images with the proper care.
- r) In the past I failed to give things to others, and to make offerings to the Triple Gem.
- s) In the past I behaved improperly towards the Dharma.

6) Suppose that we identify the kind of karma from our past that is bringing us the worst problem in our mind or in our life in general. Are we necessarily doing that same kind of karma now? What can we do about it?

**If for example we live in a place where there are lots of unpleasant smells and pollution, this is because we committed sexual misconduct in the past. We may or may not still have a problem with this kind of behavior now, because of the time lapse between a deed and its consequence. Nonetheless, one way to quickly stop most of the effect of this karma is to be *extremely careful* about doing even the smallest form of the same deed in our current daily life.**

7) Suppose we like another person but can't be close to them because of some third person who is always close to them. Discuss the difference between the "how" versus the "why" in this situation, and the apparent solution versus the real solution.

**The "how" in this situation is that the other person doesn't physically give us a chance to be near the person we want to be near to. But the reason *why* this is happening in the first place is that we in the past didn't let someone else get near someone they wanted to be close to. The apparent solution to the problem is to try to get rid of the other person somehow, which will always "backfire" or cause the wheel of knives to turn back on us. The real solution is to make very sure that we have no negative feelings toward the person, and that we be very careful to see that other people can be near the people they want to be near.**



Course XIV  
Lojong, Developing the Good Heart

*Answer Key, Class Nine*

1) Halfway through the *lojong* or text on developing the good heart entitled *Wheel of Knives*, the author—master Dharma Rakshita—says that he has "finally realized just who my enemy is." Who is this great enemy? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**He is both the tendency of self-cherishing and its immediate cause: the habit of grasping to oneself as being self-existent, or having some nature of your own independent of your projections forced upon you by your past karma.**

རང་གཅེས་འཇིན།

*rang chen dzin*

བདག་འཇིན།

*dakdzin*

2) Upon discovering his true enemy, master Dharma Rakshita calls on a bloodthirsty monster to destroy this enemy. He "stands like a god on widespread legs," "stares in hatred with two eyes," and "opens his jaws and shows his fangs." Explain the symbolism of each of these parts of the monster. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**The two legs are a knowledge of the two truths. The two eyes are method and wisdom. The fangs are the four forces for purifying bad karma.**

བདེན་གཉིས།

*den nyi*

ཐབས་ཤེས།

*tapshe*

སྟོབས་བཞི།

*tob shi*

3) How do you think a real fierce tantric angel, say the one called Yamari or the "Lord of Death" himself, would differ in nature from this symbolic monster?

**He is, in fact, exactly the same: the existence of a fierce angel is a projection of our own minds, forced on us by extremely powerful good deeds in the past, good deeds like a knowledge of the two truths and so on.**

4) Master Dharma Rakshita asks this monster to help him "smash the skull" of his enemy, who has "wasted his life." He asks him to "bring death to the heart of this butcher, my greatest enemy." This refrain continues throughout the remainder of the text. Whose skull exactly is he asking to be smashed? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**He is asking a tantric angel to help him destroy his misperceptions which consist of the tendency to see negative events as coming from their own side, rather than a boomerang of our own bad deeds coming back to us and making us see otherwise empty objects as unpleasant.**

ཏོག་པ།

*tokpa*

5) In slaying his newly recognized enemy, master Dharma Rakshita uses the wheel of knives now to cut the foe's own head. Explain just how this is done.

**The wheel of knives is the law of karma, the fact that what we do comes back to us. During our lives in samsara or the vicious circle of suffering, we react to negative things with negative actions, which again bring negative things to us, to be reacted to negatively, and thus we perpetuate pain. But the same principle can be used in reverse; we use method (bodhisattva activities such as giving and patience) and wisdom (an understanding of emptiness to accompany these activities) to collect, instead of karma, the two "collections" of merit and wisdom, which create the body and mind of an enlightened being.**

6) Towards the end of the *lojong*, master Dharma Rakshita says he would be willing to stay in the three lower realms if it would be of any help to even a single other person. Then he describes how weapons rained upon him by the hellguards would turn to flowers, as did the spears of Mara as she threw them at Lord Buddha as he sat under the Bodhi tree and reached enlightenment. Is this just a metaphor?

**It is not; a high-level bodhisattva may sincerely wish to stay in the lower realms to help others, but even this experience becomes for him or her something blissful, since their karma is so good it is forcing them to see all things as pure.**

7) The text says that life is an "illusion," that it is "unreal, like a face in a mirror," that it is a "mirage." What reason does master Dharma Rakshita give for saying this?

**He says that things are like an illusion because "everything we see is something that happens from something else." This is "dependent origination," meaning in its highest sense that all the things we see around us are productions of our perceptions, forced upon us by our past karma. So although the bad things and people around us for example seem to exist from their own side, they are in actuality produced by ourselves, and can only be removed by improving our karma.**

8) Master Dharma Rakshita says of the Enemy himself that "he is not there at all; he seems to be real, so very real, but nothing is real at all." Does this mean that our tendency to see things as self-existent doesn't exist at all?

**It means, of course, that the Enemy does not exist from his own side; this too is something empty, something that exists only through a projection of our own forced upon us by karma, and can be removed when our projections shift.**

9) The text says that neither the first drop, nor the last drop, nor any of the drops in between fills a pitcher. How does this relate to dependent origination?

**All of the parts of the raw data of an object must be combined before we can perceive it as something; and something else too is needed—the projection from our own side that synthesizes the object. No one of these by itself completes the picture.**

10) The text says that for our whole lives we are constantly mistaking a reflection of the moon in our teacup for the real moon itself. This is supposed to prove that we should do the good deeds we should, and not do the bad things that we shouldn't. What's the connection?

**The fact that certain circumstances have come together, like a little smooth patch of water in our teacup and the shining of the moon, and that this has created the appearance of the moon in the cup, is applicable to all other objects, which are created by the coming together of my own projections and the raw data on which they appear.**

11) Explain the following refrain from the end of the text:

And so I beg you be careful;  
Do those things that you should,  
And give up those things you shouldn't,  
If only in a movie.

**Nothing comes from its own side, and everything is a result of our own projections, playing by like a movie; but this not only *doesn't* mean that we can do anything we want—it means that we *must* do what is right, since we get real experiences of pleasure or pain, our whole world, through our projections.**

12) Comment on the following lines:

There is nothing you should practice,  
There is nothing you should give up.  
Strip everything of your perceptions.  
Leave your mind as it came  
From the beginning that never was.  
Don't confuse things by trying to understand them.  
Live in the place called as-it-is,  
And then you will become  
A high and holy being.

**There is nothing you should practice and nothing you should or could give up that comes from its own side. We should strip everything of our perception that they come from their own side. We should try to reach the direct perception of emptiness, where all of our ideas that things are self existent are gone, a knowledge of the primeval state of things that has always been there. Don't confuse things by trying to understand them in a way which doesn't explain them as karma and emptiness; and during the direct perception of emptiness, have no normal projections. Live in the place called as-it-is, in the sense of relating to the world by understanding how it is a production of emptiness and karma.**