



Name:

Date:

Grade:

*Homework, 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.)

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

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

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.)

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?

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

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

*Meditation assignment:* Until the next class, do 15 minutes per day of analytical meditation upon one of the first four of the eight verses. During your meditation, analyze actual events in your life right now that give you the opportunity to practice the teachings of the verse, and think about how you can apply these teachings further to change these situations for the better.

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*



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*Homework, Class Two*

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

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?

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

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 \_\_\_\_\_:*

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)
- f)
- g)
- h)

*Second way to read the phrase, as referring to \_\_\_\_\_:*

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)
- f)
- g)
- h)

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.)

*Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, analytical meditation on how you can put the fifth verse into actual practice during the next 24 hours.*

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*



Name:
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*Homework, 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.)

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

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.."?

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."

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

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

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"?

*Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, analytical meditation upon the meaning of the "Four Kings" in the *Advices of the Victorious One, Yang Gunpa.**

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*



Name:
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*Homework, 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.)

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.)

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

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

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

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.**

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

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

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

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

*Meditation assignment:* Analytical meditation, 15 minutes per day, the meditation on giving and taking, focusing on taking the three poisons of yourself from yourself later in the day.

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*





Name:
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*Homework, 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.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

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.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

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

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.**

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

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

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

*Meditation assignment:* 15 minutes per day, analytical meditation going through the eighteen pledges for developing the good heart, making sure you understand what they mean, and choosing a few to apply to your own life that day.

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*



Name:
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*Homework, 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.)

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.)

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

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.

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

a)

b)

c)

d)

*Meditation assignment:* A 15-minute analytical meditation on the following: think of the times today or yesterday that you have kept your vows by avoiding some negative deed. Then consider why you did so; was it a well thought out understanding of karma and emptiness—a real understanding of how you yourself can turn into an enlightened being, and how the world around you can change into a paradise by your keeping your vows, or was it just a changeable instinct or cultural habit?

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*



Name:
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*Homework, 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.)

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.)

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.

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?

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

*Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, analytical meditation on events and people from the early part of your life, examining how they might have been very significant for your spiritually.*

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*



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*Homework, 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.)

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).

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?

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

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.

\_\_\_Those who are supposed to help me hurt me instead.

\_\_\_I find myself getting sick a lot.

\_\_\_I have different kinds of mental suffering.

\_\_\_People around me are bossy.

\_\_\_People say unpleasant things to me.

\_\_\_Unpleasant things often happen around me.

\_\_\_I have trouble finding friends and other people to help me.

\_\_\_People act in an intimidating way to me.

\_\_\_I feel depressed a lot.

\_\_\_Whatever I try to do never seems to work out.

\_\_\_No matter what I do, my Lama never seems to be pleased.

\_\_\_People seem to criticize everything I do.

\_\_\_The people around me can't seem to get along with each other.

\_\_\_I have had, or have, some very serious health problems.

\_\_\_I tend to get serious headaches or pains in my body.

\_\_\_I often feel anxiety or worry.

\_\_\_I don't have enough money.

\_\_\_I don't look very good physically.

\_\_\_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?

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.

*Meditation assignment:* 15 minutes per day, do an analytical meditation each day on a different major physical or mental problem in your life, or a problem of your world or your own general situation in life. Try to find a specific verse in the *Wheel of Knives* that addresses this problem, and contemplate the real cause of your problems, and what you can do about it.

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*



Name:

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*Homework, 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.)

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.)

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?

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.)

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.

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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.**

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.**

*Meditation assignment:* 15 minutes per day, analytical meditation: review the lines of the second part of the *Wheel of Knives*. If you find that any of the negative qualities described there seem to apply to you especially, then analyze it in light of karma and emptiness—try to see how "smashing the skull of your misperceptions" might help you overcome them.

*Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*