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CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class One: Bodhisattva Vows Overview

Three kinds of suffering:

- 1.) **DUK-NGEL GYI DUK-NGEL**
suffering of suffering **Suffering of suffering.** Physical and mental suffering. We have it on and off -- occasionally, not all day long.

- 2.) **GYURWAY DUK-NGEL**
change of suffering **Suffering of change.** Any impure kind of pleasure that you can have. Impure means that you will lose the pleasure and have a lousy ending; the pleasure deteriorates at the end. Buddhism doesn't consider pleasure ending in suffering as true pleasure.

It's called "licking honey off a razor blade" - it tastes good for a moment, and then you feel the cut and pain. A good deed ripens into pleasure and then the karma of the virtue that caused the pleasure runs out, leaving pain.

- 3.) **KYABPA DUJE KYI DUK-NGEL**
pervasive of suffering **Pervasive suffering.** Having a nature or condition where we must get old and die. Pervasive means it covers everybody (except Buddhas).

Suffering can also be divided into two types:

- 1.) The sufferings of this life (the three above).
- 2.) The sufferings which occur during and after the moment of death, which are worse than the sufferings of life - the experiences of the bardo and its hallucinations as well as the pain of death, which are very frightening and horrible.

You are moving through the timeline of your life uncontrollably. You can't slow down or stop, and you can not affect the progression toward an end which you can't control. You are driven toward death inexorably.

This is our condition -- to have the understanding that our lives are made up of these sufferings is renunciation. The purpose of Buddhism is to eliminate a suffering life and the causes of a suffering life and to live in a paradise.

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---|
| BODHI | CHITTA | 1.) The wish in the form of a prayer. |
| Buddhahood | wish for | 2.) The wish in action. (Taking bodhisattva vows and practicing the six perfections.) |

Maitreya's definition of bodhichitta:

Bodhichitta is the wish to attain pure and total enlightenment for the sake of all other beings.

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Class One, continued

Renunciation is wanting to be free from suffering. Bodhichitta is renunciation directed at others - wanting others to be free from suffering. **Bodhisattva vows are a code of conduct for living life. The purpose of bodhisattva vows is to study that code of life which will lead you to being capable of helping all of the other beings around you who are suffering.**

We are studying from a book called *Highway for Bodhisattvas*, which is an explanation of vows, not the original presentation of the vows.

JANG CHUB **SHUNG LAM** written by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419)
short for bodhisattva central path (highway)

Highway for Bohisattvas is one of Je Tsongkapa's greatest writings, the definitive work on bodhisattva vows, this work has never been translated.

NORBUY UTRENG *String of Shining Jewels* by Geshe Tsewang Samdrup. This
jewel string light work gives the vows and a succinct explanation of them.

We'll be studying mostly this book and using Je Tsongkapa's for the difficult fine points.

Books containing the bodhisattva vows:

1.) *Sutra of the Essence of Space* contains 13 of the bodhisattva root vows. *Sutra of Skillful Means* has one bodhisattva root vow. These are both spoken by Buddha.

2.) *Bodhisattva Levels* by Master Asanga (350 A.D.) has 4 root vows

The above books contain a total of 18 root vows and are contained in the Perfection of Wisdom sutras.

3.) *Compendium of Advice* by Master Shantideva (695-743 A.D.) He took all 18 root vows and put them in one place.

4.) *Twenty Verses on Vows* by Master Chandragomi (925 A.D.) This is the classic source of the 46 secondary bodhisattva vows.

Total: 64 bodhisattva vows

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Class Two: Types of Vows

- 1.) **NYECHU DOMPAY TSULTRIM** **Morality of restraining yourself from bad deeds**
bad deeds restrain morality (things which harm others or yourself). Basically,
it means keeping vows - freedom, bodhisattva,
and tantric.

A.) **Ten non-virtues:**

Of body: Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct

Of speech: Lying, divisive speech, harsh words, idle talk

Of mind: Coveting, ill will, wrong view

B.) **Vowed Morality** (*Pratimoksha*, or freedom vows)

1.) Fully ordained monk - 253 vows

2.) Fully ordained nun - 364 vows

3.) Intermediate nun - 42 vows

4.) Novice monk - 36 vows

5.) Novice nun - 36 vows

6.) Lifetime layman - 5 vows

7.) Lifetime laywoman - 5 vows

8.) One-day vows - 8 vows

It is **best** to take bodhisattva vows if have one of the first seven vows listed here before taking bodhisattva vows. You **can** take them if you are observing the ten non-virtues pretty well.

- 2.) **GEWAY CHUD KYI TSULTRIM** **The morality of collecting goodness - the**
goodness (collecting) of morality actions you must do to turn into an
enlightened being. This means collecting
the two great masses of energy to become
a Buddha. There are two divisions of doing
the six perfections (good deeds).

Six Pefections:

Method deeds: 1.) Giving, 2.) Morality, 3.) Not getting angry, 4.) Enjoying good deeds

Wisdom deeds: 5.) Meditation, 6.) Wisdom

Method deeds: Collecting good deeds to give you the physical body of a Buddha.

Wisdom deeds: Collecting wisdom to give you the mind of a Buddha.

- 3.) **SEMCHEN DUNJE KYI TSULTRIM** **The morality of working for the good**
living beings working of morality **of all other beings.**
for the good

Working for the good of all other beings is doing the prior two moralities, but with the motivation to help others.

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Class Two, continued

Vowed Morality:

- 1.) **Freedom (*Pratimoksha*) Vows** - Not hurting others.
- 2.) **Bodhisattva Vows** - Will help others and be considerate of them.
- 3.) **Tantric vows** - Attitudes, activities, behaviors to undertake to become enlightened in this life. Like an atom bomb's power. If you break them, it does great harm.

Better to take a vow to do or not to do something, and act accordingly, than just to act without the vow.

Benefits of Vows:

Reasons why following vows is better than acting the same without a vow:

- 1.) **Taken from someone else:** You have the benefit of having to live up to their scrutiny and expectation, and because of not wanting them to catch you breaking them.
- 2.) **Pure motivation:** You take vows to become enlightened to help others. If you don't have that motivation, the vows don't form in your mindstream. By remembering your pure motivation for taking vows, you restrain yourself from doing the non-virtue.
- 3.) **Fixable:** You can repair the vows when they have been broken.
- 4.) If you're careful, if you have the first two qualities strongly, **you won't break the vow in the first place.**

Two kinds of bodhisattva vows:

1.) TSA TUNG **Root vows - 18**
root, primary fall down

2.) NYE JE **Secondary vows - 46**
bad did

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Class 3: Parts of Taking Vows

Two Great Divisions of Bodhichitta:

- 1.) **MUN - SEM** **The wish for bodhichitta in the form of a prayer;** the wish to help all living beings.
- 2.) **JUK - SEM** **Acting to help all living beings.**

It would be best to take a vow to develop the wish, and then take another vow to act as a bodhisattva. However, it's done now as a vow which incorporates the wish and acting in one vow. The vow to be a bodhisattva is the same as acting as a bodhisattva. The vow is to do it, to act like one.

Parts of taking vows:

- 1.) **JORWA** - **preliminary**, more important than the main event.
 - a.) **solwa dabpa**: requesting the lama for the vows:
 - * the person taking the vow can be ordained or unordained.
 - * should have at least the wish to benefit others.
 - * should intend to keep the three moralities.
 - * vow giver doesn't have to be ordained, but it is better.
 - * it is best if the vow giver can also give you tantric vows.
 - * the vow giver can be a woman or a man.
 - * the vow giver should also have the wish to help all sentient beings.
 - * the vow giver must be keeping their vows.
 - * the vow giver must not have degenerated in their practice of the six perfections.
 - * the person requesting should make the place beautiful, with Buddha images and the lama on a throne.
 - * show respect to the lama; touch their feet.
 - * make mandala offering.
 - * request vows three times. (If you don't really want them, the vows won't grow in your mind.)
 - * kneel to receive vows.
 - * lama should explain the value of receiving the vows.
 - * the lama should explain which vow are more or less serious to break.
 - * lama explains the benefits of taking the vows to make the student happy.
 - b.) **collect tsok**: invoking all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to come and witness you taking the vows. Recall how fantastic the Buddhas, etc. who are present are.
 - c.) **request to grant quickly**, i.e. now.
 - d.) **feel joy** about the vast virtue one can collect with bodhisattva activity and vows.
 - e.) **the lama asks about obstacles** - do you have the wish to benefit sentient beings and do you want the vows.

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Class 3, continued

- 2.) **NGUSHI - Actual event:** the lama asks three times do you want to take the bodhisattva vows, and you answer yes three times. That's it.
- 3.) **JUK - CHOK - Conclusion.**
 - a.) Ask Buddha to understand that you are swearing to him. Make three prostrations to each of the ten directions.
 - b.) Lama pumps up students with the benefits of the vows.
 - c.) Do thanksgiving offering to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas for the opportunity to take the vows.
 - d.) Don't advertise it to those with no faith.

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Class 4: Vows #1-9 Explained

TSA TUNG **Root downfalls.** Downfall means that if you break the vow, you will
root fall down fall down to the hells.

If you completely commit a root downfall, **it destroys the vows in your mental continuum.** Once you break one of your root vows, **you cannot attain the first bodhisattva *bhumi* in this life** (seeing emptiness under the influence of bodhichitta is the first *bhumi*). This is the case even if you take your vows again.

PAMPA **To be defeated by your enemy** - your enemy (your mental
to be defeated afflictions) causes you to break your root vows. Root vows are
by your enemy all called **pampas**, or defeats.

Root vows:

1.) **Praising yourself and putting down other people.** The motivation must be that you are after a.) **material gain**, or b.) **the respect or admiration** of others. Motivation must be a desire or attachment for your gain. If you correct someone, you must do it with great love, joy, and wish to benefit them.

For you to commit a downfall, the person you are speaking to must grasp what you are saying. The moment they grasp what you are saying, the vow is broken. (This seems to apply to mahayana persons putting down other mahayana persons, and not to ordinary people. The point is that it may result in a schism, which is very bad.)

Either praising yourself or putting down another is breaking the vow. Both don't have to be present. Those are the two vows or parts of this vow. It must be verbal speech, not just a thought. What you say should be a lie in order to break this one. The main motivation here is attachment or desire.

2.) **Not giving someone Dharma teachings or material assistance.** The other person should have one of two qualities; a.) **must have a serious problem**, like a disease, impoverished, etc., b.) **you are their only option**; they don't have a network of support such as family, friends, etc. You must also be able to help - you must have what they need.

Limitations on giving include not giving things which might cause harm, such as weapons, poison, etc. You must be overwhelmed by feelings of stinginess because you don't want to part with what you have. They must specifically ask you for something; if you see a need and they don't ask, you don't break the vow. The main motivation for breaking this vow must be attachment, stinginess.

Really, there are two parts to this vow a.) **not giving Dharma**, and b.) **not giving material things.** You don't give what is really needed because you don't want to part with it. You let others suffer because of your attachment and greed.

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Class 4, continued

3.) **Striking another person or staying angry when they try to explain and apologize** for something they did (when your anger has built up over time and you eventually strike them or throw something at them). It must be a person and not an animal. Spontaneous altercations and fights are not included. To break this, they must sincerely explain or apologize, and you hang on to your anger anyway, even though they apologize.

You break the vow when you **refuse the apology and stay angry, or when you stay angry and strike the person**. Both are not necessary; it is either or both. So there are two vows present in one. Anger is the main affliction with this vow. Someone has done something to hurt you, and they come to you to explain or apologize. You still hang on to your anger, and don't let them explain. The motivation is that you want to hurt them.

4.) **Rejecting the mahayana teachings**. You reject either of the two great divisions of mahayana teachings, on **emptiness** or on the **bodhisattva path/life**. The way you reject it is to say that it's invalid; to say the Buddha never taught it.

Or teaching false Dharma, by making up your own interpretation of the teachings and teaching it as Dharma. You must say that this is my interpretation, experience, idea, etc., and not pass off your own ideas as scripture. To break the vow, you must a.) know that you made it up, b.) like the idea, c.) teach it to others as mahayana Buddhism, and c.) the others accept it. The main mental affliction here is **ignorance**. You must keep and teach the Dharma purely and strictly without any corruption or change from the original in the slightest.

5.) **Stealing the belongings of the three Jewels**: images of the Buddha, the books, the temple objects, etc. Stealing from any of the three Jewels breaks the vow, so there are in fact three parts to this vow. The motivation must be a **bad thought or klesha**. If you steal with the motivation to help others, it doesn't break the vow. Can use stealth or force to steal it. The vow is broken when you think, "now I have it; it's mine".

6.) **Giving up the Dharma of the listeners or the self-made Buddhas or the mahayana teachings**. You give it up by saying that this isn't the teaching of the Buddha. You must deny the validity of the listeners' whole path, not just an aspect of the teaching. You must say that the listeners aren't following the Buddha's teaching overall, or say that about self-made Buddhas or the mahayana - that it's not a path taught by Buddha.

7.) **Taking the golden robe away**. Taking their robes by: 1.) telling them to take them off, or 2.) taking them off yourself, or making them give back their vows and become a layperson. You must have the desire to hurt them in all of the above cases or be physically hurting them by beating them, etc. Both have to be done with the motivation to hurt them.

8.) **Doing any of the immediate five**: killing your father, mother, or an arhant (someone who has achieved nirvana), causing a schism among the Buddha's direct disciples, or trying to harm a Buddha.

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Class 4, continued

9.) **Wrong view.** Either **denying the law of karma** by believing that you can do anything and nothing will come of it, **or denying past and future lives** by saying that they don't exist. You must believe it from the bottom of your heart. (*root vows continued in class 5*)

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Class 5: Vows #9-18 Explained

10.) **Destroying a city, etc. (or a county or a country).** Motivation is to want to destroy those places based upon any of the three poisons (attachment, aversion, or ignorance).

11.) **Teaching emptiness to those who are not prepared.** Qualities of a person you should **not** teach emptiness to: a.) They have not studied emptiness carefully, b.) your description of emptiness would scare them, c.) they have wishing bodhichitta, **if as a result of your teaching**, they would a.) get scared, b.) give up mahayana, and c.) take up hinayana as a result of your emptiness teaching.

If you check the person out carefully and think they are ready and they still give up mahayana as a result of your teaching, you didn't break the vow. Teaching emptiness to non-mahayana and freaking them out is a non-virtue, but not breaking the vow. In general, you don't want to freak someone out about emptiness, though.

12.) **To turn someone back from total enlightenment.** You must turn someone back from mahayana by telling them that they won't be able to practice the six perfections, and so should follow the hinayana path of seeing emptiness and following the four arya truths to attain nirvana. You tell them the mahayana path is too hard and so to follow a lesser path, and they actually listen to you and give up mahayana.

13.) **Convincing others to give up their pratimoksha (freedom) vows** (the eight types of vows). You can do it with someone who has the vows and is keeping them. You get them to give them up by telling them to come over to mahayana, and that you don't need freedom vows, because mahayana is all you need.

14.) **Disparaging the hinayana** (study of the four noble truths, listeners or self-made Buddhas) **by saying that you can't reach nirvana by following the hinayana.** (You can reach nirvana by following hinayana, so it's a false statement.) The vow is broken when they hear and understand your statement.

14½.) (Vow left out because it duplicates a vow from another source.) **Praising yourself and putting down others.** More detail in this one: you must be a person who is teaching, studying, or reciting mahayana texts, and you say to someone that you are not doing these things for praise or gain, but some other person is. You say that someone else is undertaking a bodhisattva activity for personal gain, and that you aren't a bodhisattva for personal gain. What you say is a lie, and you say this with the motivation of personal gain or reputation. This closely duplicates vow #1, but is from another sutra source and is somewhat different. It is a specific instance of vow #1. The motivation must be jealousy for the honor or gain that another is getting.

15.) **To say a lie about the profound.** There must be another person there whom you are talking to. You say that you have seen emptiness, which is not true, that you like them, and that if they do what you say, they can see emptiness too. When they grasp the words, you have broken the vow.

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Class 5, continued

16.) **To accept the property of the three jewels.** To receive Dharma items taken or stolen from the three Jewels. Stolen means anything dedicated to the use of the three Jewels, such as food, books, money, etc.

17.) **To institute a bad rule.** When making rules for Dharma practitioners, to take away the possessions of meditators because they don't have enough scriptural knowledge, and to give those possessions to those who are studying scripture. You are disrespecting the meditators. You break the vow when you take the meditators' goods. The motivation is dislike, anger, or hatred.

18.) **Giving up aspiring bodhichitta.** You personally decide that you don't want to become enlightened to benefit others. You give up and say, "I'm not going to help all sentient beings." You can only commit this one for a second. The next moment after you have the thought, you are no longer a bodhisattva.

You don't need the four chains to break this vow or vow #9. This vow and wrong view are the two worst vows to break. You have promised all beings to help them, and then renege - to every living being!

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Class 6: Four Factors Needed to Break Vows

The Four Chains

If you break a root vow, 1.) you can't see emptiness with bodhichitta (attain the first bhumi) in this life, 2.) it makes it very difficult to meet spiritual teachers in the future, and 3.) you can't increase the virtue needed to see emptiness any more.

In order to break a root vow (except for vows #9 & 18), you must have four attitudes in your mind as you do the deed:

KUN - TRI **Factors which must be present to break 16 of the root vows.**
mental affliction,
completely entwining bad thought

1.) **Not to consider what you are going to do or are doing as something wrong.**

If you think it's wrong to do the deed at any time during or before you do it, even for a moment, you don't break the vow.

2.) **To be willing to do it again.**

If you have one moment of regret, ever, you don't break the vow.

3.) **You enjoy doing it.**

If you regret doing it, then you don't break the vow.

4.) **You don't have any shame about doing the deed for reasons relating to yourself (your own conscience), or others (what they will think of you).**

You didn't avoid the deed because you don't care about what others think and don't have any conscience.

All four factors must be complete to break a root vow. So if you have a moment of regret or conscience, or of not enjoying the deed, or thinking it's wrong, if any of these happen for a moment at any time, you don't break a root vow. If you commit one of the sixteen root downfalls without all four of these, it becomes a secondary downfall.

If you break a root vow, it destroys your vows, but you can take them again if you have a small feeling of wanting to help all others. If that inkling of wanting to help all others isn't there, then you can't retake bodhisattva vows. Even if you retake the vows, you can't reach the first bhumi in this life.

A medium breaking of a root vow is not to think it is wrong and to have one or two of the other factors present. Your vow is damaged by this. **To restore the vows**, you must collect three people together and confess the deed to them.

A small breaking of a root vow is not to have factor #1 (thinking that it's wrong) but to have any of the other factors. **To repair the vows**, confess to one person.

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Class 6, continued

Karmic purification (You must have these four when you confess to breaking vows.)

- 1.) **Basis force** - Taking refuge. You recommit yourself to becoming enlightened, seeing emptiness directly and to those who have seen emptiness. These are the real three jewels. You reassert your bodhisattva ideal.
- 2.) **Destruction force** - The intelligent regret of an educated Buddhist. Knowing you will suffer from your bad deed.
- 3.) **Restraint force** - You stop doing it. Set a time limit to refrain from the deed: one day, 15 min., etc.
- 4.) **Antidote force** - Do something to make up for what you did.

You can lose your bodhisattva vows by breaking them or giving them back formally (breaking #18 is the same as giving them back formally). You don't lose your bodhisattva vows when you die; they stay with you in future lives.

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Class 7: Secondary Vows #1-16

Secondary transgressions:

NYE - JE name for the secondary transgressions (downfalls)

did bad

You can restore these vows if they're broken by confessing them to another person.

You can break vows in an **afflicted** or **non-afflicted** way. Afflicted means having mental afflictions such as anger, pride, etc., when you break it. Non-afflicted means having no mental afflictions in mind but breaking the vow out of forgetfulness, laziness, etc.

The first seven vows are against the perfection of giving:

1.) **Not to offer the three to the three Jewels.** Three refers to your body, speech, and mind. At a minimum, each day you must do some **physical** reverence to the three jewels (bow, prostrate, etc.). **Verbally**, you must say a minimum of four lines about the three jewels; say something good about them. The dharma jewel consists of the direct perception of emptiness, spiritual realizations, and cessation of mental afflictions, etc. Sangha jewel are those who have perceived emptiness directly. You must make body, speech and mind offerings to all three Jewels each day.

2.) **To allow improper thoughts of desire to go on.** Improper means that you have a state of mind which is never satisfied with what you have, excessive sensual desires, or an attachment to having others praise you. Any effort at all to prevent it will prevent you from breaking the vow. Desire becomes excessive when you will do something wrong to fulfill it.

3.) **Not respecting elders.** Elders are someone who took bodhisattva vows before you, no matter what their age.

4.) **Not answering a question.** This means either not answering a question or giving an inadequate answer to any question, not just Dharma questions. Exceptions: sick, asleep or groggy, teaching and it interrupts the flow, want to teach a lesson (with bodhisattva motivation.)

5.) **Not to accept a sincere invitation.** Exceptions: sick, having accepted another invitation already, too far or dangerous to go, invited out of bad motive, to teach a lesson, if it diverts you from a virtuous act.

6.) **Not to accept money, gifts, etc., when they're sincerely offered.** Exceptions: you know you would get attached to the thing, you know the person who is giving something will later regret giving it, you think the thing is stolen, it will hurt the person financially, it would be a problem for you to have it.

7.) **Not to give Dharma to a person who wants it.** (In the root vows, the motivation is not giving out of attachment and not wanting to share it.) The motivation here is laziness, anger,

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Class 7, continued

or anything other than attachment. Exceptions: sick, to teach a lesson, the student is waiting to criticize you or is disrespectful, you know they can't get the meaning, they aren't sitting properly, you know they would freak out if you taught the subject, they don't believe or aren't interested in what you are teaching, or have deep wrong views, you know they won't follow what you teach, the teaching will make them worse, or they will spread that teaching to those who are not ready.

The next nine vows are against the perfection of morality:

8.) **Not to reach out to those who have broken their vows or done bad deeds.** They are the ones who need your help the most, because they are residing in the cause of suffering. They will suffer from their deeds. You shouldn't ignore or ostracize them. If they're evil, you must resist them, and in general shouldn't be badly influenced by them. Exceptions: to teach a lesson, if your getting close to them alienates many others.

9.) **Failing to follow the rules, which if followed, inspire faith in other people.** This mainly applies to monastic vows, but it can also apply to morality. For example, if people know you're Buddhist, or a bodhisattva, and then you lie, they may think that Buddhists are less than honest in general as a result. This is called "protecting others' faith."

10.) **Performing deeds which are only of lesser benefit for all living beings. Natural rules** are the same throughout the world, like "don't kill, don't steal", etc. **Proscribed rules** are those made up in response to an event. For example, someone got drunk and caused problems, so a rule not to drink was made. In monastic vows, these rules pertain to keeping cloth and certain other possessions, etc. **A bodhisattva must keep vows incredibly strictly; proscribed rules must be broken if it benefits others** - those vows shouldn't restrict you from helping others.

11.) **If you don't break the first seven vows of morality** (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh words, and idle talk) **when an extraordinary circumstance requires, you break your bodhisattva vow.** For this vow to apply to you, you must a.) be a bodhisattva who, for trillions of years, has perfected your practice, b.) have an extraordinary insight into when it is necessary to do something strange or unusual to help others, and c.) must possess ultimate great compassion (seeing all beings as your child burning in coals needing help). For this vow to apply to you, you must be very, very advanced. You must see that there is no other possible option other than breaking the morality vow to help the person. In the case of killing, specifically, if you don't have the power to transfer the being's consciousness to a higher realm, than this vow doesn't hold for you.

12.) **Being engaged in wrong livelihood**, one which includes flattery, hinting, harassment, pretense, or any activity which is harmful to another person. The exception is if you are struggling to get out of it, then you don't break the vow.

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Class 7, continued

13.) **Being wild or frivolous.** Wasting time and not being serious. Exception: if you're struggling to stop and can't control yourself, to stop another's grief or depression, to lead another from a bad deed, to create a better environment for people, to attract people to Buddhism who wouldn't otherwise come.

14.) **To tell others that they need to delay reaching nirvana in order to help others.** You can best help people by reaching nirvana.

15.) **Not to address rumors about yourself.** Not to clear your name with the motivation to prevent others from collecting negative karma by criticizing a bodhisattva.

16.) **Not to correct others, even if it must be done forcefully.** Don't get hung up on what others will think of it - if you need to scream, do it.

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Class 8: Secondary Vows #17-34

Vows 17-28 are against the perfection of patience:

- 17.) SHE - LA LE LENDU SHE-LASOK GE JONG GI CHI SHI
having been in answer yell back, etc practice virtue of four subjects
yelled at

In answer to being yelled at, you yell back, etc. If you don't yell back, you follow the first of the four points of virtue.

Four points of the practice of virtue: (breaking any of these four breaks this vow)

- 1.) SHE LA LAR MI SHEWA - Someone yells at you and you don't respond in kind.
- 2.) TRUPA LA LAR MI TROWA - Someone has gotten angry at you and put you down and you don't respond in kind.
- 3.) DEKPA LA LAR TSANG MI DEKPA - Someone hits you and you don't respond in kind.
- 4.) TSANG-DRU LA LAR TSANG MI DRU - If someone points out your faults and the dirt on you, you don't respond in kind.

- 18.) TRUPA NAMNI YEL WARN DOR
people who are angry just ignore them

Just ignoring people who are angry because of something you did to them or something that they think you did to them. If they're angry at you, you must go to them and apologize, or explain that you didn't try to harm them so that they don't fester in their anger. You must clear the air. Motivation of pride, laziness, jealousy, hatred prevent this. Exceptions: to teach a lesson, to discredit a wrong spiritual teaching or some evil, if someone would get more angry if you brought it up again, someone not comfortable with the apology, someone who wouldn't be helped by an apology.

- 19.) PAROL SHEKYI CHAKPA PONG

Not accepting an apology. This one is without the simmering anger, for example, you don't feel like accepting the apology or feel superior. Exceptions: to teach a lesson, apology received is insincere or disrespectful.

- 20.) TRUPAY SEM KYI JESU JUK
thoughts of anger let them flow

Not to consider it wrong to be angry, not to try to counteract the anger, to let it flow and even to enjoy the anger. Exceptions: if you try to counter it, or have some regret, even the smallest effort is enough to avoid breaking the vow.

CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class 8, continued

Vows 21 - 23 are against the perfection of joyous effort.

- 21.) NYEN KUR DUCHIR KORNAM DU
gain admiration attached to gathering group of students

To gather a group of students because you are attached to gain or admiration. For example, to want them to fawn over you, etc.

- 22.) LELO LASOK SEL MIJE
laziness etc. not trying to stop

Not trying to stop your laziness, etc. This doesn't mean don't rest or relax. It means don't become a lethargic slug. Exceptions: recharging from work, travel, efforts, etc. Relaxing in general is OK.

- 23.) CHAKPE DREMOY TAM LA TEN
out of desire frivolous talk on to rely

Frivolous talk about sex, crime, politics, etc. If it's a point of information, find out about it quickly and succinctly, and leave it alone. Exceptions: mindfulness about frivolous talk - have a sharp, focused mind while engaging, in order to get necessary information. Your mind only functions well for a brief period of time; don't waste the small window of opportunity you have to use your mind to get enlightened.

Vows 24 - 26 are against the perfection of concentration:

- 24.) TING NGEN DZIN GYI DUN MI - TSOK
single minded concentration of not to seek meaning

Failing to seek the meaning of single-pointed concentration. If someone is teaching it, and you don't go because you are lazy, proud, etc. Exceptions: you doubt they're teaching correctly, you are already a master, or are sick.

- 25.) SAMTEN DRIPPA PONG MIJE
meditative concentration obstacles failing to remove

Failing to remove the obstacles to meditation. (These are not just obstacles to meditation, but to clear thinking in general.)

Five obstacles to meditation:

- a.) **Gu-gyu** - Be wild: for the mind to flip around from object to object in a restless way.
- b.) **Nu-sem** - Bad thoughts: Irritation, hatred, etc. Meditation accentuates these.
- c.) **Muk-nyi** - Foggy-mindedness: A dull mind, drowsiness.

CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class 8, continued

- d.) **Dupa-la-dunpa** - Attraction for sense objects: food, smells, etc.
- e.) **Te-tsom** - Being indecisive and not choosing to do important things.

If you don't try to stop these (struggle even a little against them) during meditation, you break this vow.

26.) **To consider the pleasant feeling of meditation an important personal attainment in and of itself.** It is just a side effect on the path, another temporary pleasure which will turn to suffering. The good feelings aren't a goal.

Vows 27 - 34 are against the perfection of wisdom.

27.) **To reject hinayana by saying that bodhisattvas shouldn't study, listen to, learn, or follow hinayana teachings.** Different from the primary vow in that it isn't a rejection of the whole system, only a rejection of it for bodhisattvas.

28.) **To devote yourself to hinayana at the expense of your mahayana practices.**

29.) **To make efforts in non-Buddhist teachings** (excessively, to the point of detracting from mahayana pursuits). There is not enough time to squander it on paths if they don't work. Pick a path and go with it fully.

30.) **Even if you make efforts, to be attracted.** You make a cursory-type study of hinayana or other religious systems and get sucked into that system.

31.) **To give up mahayana.** Four ways to do it - by saying:

- a.) This particular part of the subject isn't correct/important.
- b.) This isn't written so well.
- c.) This author isn't so good.
- d.) This isn't much benefit for living beings.

32.) **Praising yourself or criticizing others** (out of anger, pride, or self-cherishing. The root vow is broken out of desire.) Exceptions: disproving harmful views, or to teach a lesson. You can advertise yourself to attract students in order to sincerely help others.

33.) **Not going to a dharma talk out of laziness or pride.** Exceptions: Sick/unable, unaware of class, already a master of the subject, you suspect it's inaccurately taught, in deep retreat and can't break, or if it might upset your regular Dharma teacher.

34.) **To put down your Dharma teacher by not seeing them as Buddha, to speak badly about them, or to be more interested in the presentation than the content,** either because of the teacher's appearance or the way in which it is presented.

CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class 9: Secondary Vows #34-46

These next vows are offenses against the third morality of helping other people. All prior secondary vows covered the six perfections, which pertains to the second morality of collecting goodness.

35.) GUPAY DROKSU DRO MI JE
need help go not to

Not to go help someone in need. Going to help anyone that you see that needs help. Any task, such as washing dishes, etc., helping travelers, teaching skills or language, helping with general virtuous activities. Exceptions: If sick, time already committed to help elsewhere, doing more important spiritual task, can refer to another for help, they're too dumb to learn, don't have the capacity, if they have other sufficient means to get assistance, if you want to teach them a lesson, or if helping creates more problems than it helps.

36.) NAPAY RIMDRO JAWA PONG
service sick avoid

To avoid helping the sick. Exceptions: as above.

Two classic reasons people break secondary vows:

1.) NAR SEM
You want to hurt someone.

2.) KONG TRO
anger

These two together are called **SEM NYI** "those two states of mind". **They are afflicted states of mind, caused by kleshas, or mental afflictions.**

There are two passive (non-afflicted) states of mind, which aren't from bad thoughts and aren't as bad as the first two:

1.) LE LO
laziness (addicted to low-level, behavior requiring no effort.)

2.) NYOM LE
don't consider it important to keep vows, don't enjoy doing virtue.

These two together are called **SHEN NYI**, "those other two states of mind". (We don't advance spiritually - seeing angels or having amazing results, because we don't keep bodhisattva vows purely, i.e., reviewing broken ones and sweat out not doing it again. Tantra won't work without keeping your bodhisattva vows.)

37.) DUK - NGEL SELWAR MIJEPA
suffering clear away not to try

Not to try to stop anyone's mental or physical suffering. Same exceptions as for #36.

CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class 9, continued

- 38.) **BAK ME** **NAMLA RIK MITUN**
 people acting failing to show
 carelessly karmically good reason

Not trying to reason with those doing something which will cause them future suffering. Not trying to dissuade them from doing it. Exceptions: You're not capable of dissuading them, you refer them to someone who can dissuade them, they will catch themselves or their spiritual teacher will correct them, if they would continue the behavior to spite you, you know they won't listen to you, or you want to teach them a lesson.

39.) **Failing to repay someone who has helped you.** You don't think about what they did for you or you can't outdo their kindness. Exceptions: waiting for a better opportunity to repay them, they would be embarrassed or uncomfortable if repaid or would prefer not to be repaid, or to teach a lesson (you must have great love, have their interest at heart, and be a great bodhisattva to do that.)

40.) **Failing to try to stop someone's grief.** Same exceptions as #35.

41.) **Not giving material assistance to someone who needs it.** Having a motivation of wanting to hurt someone, being angry, not caring, not respecting your vows when not helping. Exceptions: You don't have what they need, or what they want is harmful.

42.) **Failing to take care of the needs of your students.** Includes physical or spiritual needs. Exceptions: too sick, to teach the student a lesson, if it would break monastic vows, if they are capable of supporting themselves, or if they are incorrigible and would not make progress.

43.) **Failing to get along with others.** Because of laziness or hatred you don't make an effort to reach out to someone that you don't get along with. Exceptions: You know it won't work, the other person won't cooperate to get along and it gets worse, they are teaching wrong spirituality, or getting along with them would cause harm to others.

44.) **Failing to praise someone's good qualities or something good they've said.** Exceptions: You're sick, you think it would make them uncomfortable, waiting for a better opportunity, you know they'd get a big head and have problems, or they teach some wrong spirituality.

45.) **Failing to cut off a person when it's necessary.** Cutting them off means to chastise when necessary, to punish them, or to expel them. Exceptions: waiting for a better chance, they won't listen to chastising, they are self-correcting already, or expelling them would cause a major split in the group.

46.) **Failing to use your supernatural powers when necessary.**

CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class 9, continued

Et Ceteras: (which are also vows not to break.)

Offences Against the Wish for Enlightenment:

- 1.) Failing to support those who deserve it.
- 2.) Failing to let go of anger when someone hurts you.
- 3.) Discriminating between people: like & dislike, good & bad, etc.
- 4.) Failing to take yourself to a spiritual teacher, if available.
- 5.) Failing to learn and contemplate the Dharma, if it's available.
- 6.) Failing to think of others as you use objects: "I'm resting to help others, I'm eating to help others, I'm living to benefit others, etc." Basically, not being a consumer of good karma.
- 7.) Failing to think that the good deeds you are doing are to benefit all living beings as you do the good deed.

Four Black Deeds and Four White Deeds (antidotes):

- 1.) **Knowingly deceiving your lama.**

Antidote: Never speak a lie to any being, even in jest.

- 2.) **To get anyone to regret something virtuous they have done.**

Antidote: Try to get people to practice the bodhisattva ideal.

- 3.) **Saying something unpleasant to a bodhisattva out of anger.** (You can't tell who is a bodhisattva! Anyone could be one.)

Antidote: **dak nang jorwa** - see the purity. Always think that there is something deeper going on, that there is some reason why this happened, that everyone around you is striving to make you happy, and they're doing things to give you a message and to make you happy. Every being is doing things to try to lead you to happiness. Practice seeing things like this. See all beings as the Teacher. **This is an extremely important practice for becoming enlightened.**

- 4.) **To be devious, dishonest, or deceitful to any being with a bad motivation.**

Antidote: Be totally honest and straightforward with every being you meet.

CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class 10: Keeping Your Vows

Keeping Your Vows - Five Steps: All five attitudes must be present to keep your vows.

- 1.) **SUNGLA** **GUPA**
speech (of Buddha) to respect

Respect the speech of the Buddha. The first step of keeping your vows well is to think of them as spoken and written by a person who could see your mind, life, and thoughts, and created the vows to help you. The Buddha spoke them for you personally, and knew your needs, mind, etc. The best way to have a good life is to force yourself to reap good karma by keeping these vows. *They are a gift to you personally by an enlightened being.*

- 2.) **SAMPA** **SUM** **Have the three intentions.**
intentions three

- 1.) Intend to follow the vows because an enlightened being has made the effort to reach out to you and give you this, and has made contact and given them to you.
- 2.) Intend to reach Buddhahood. Think big - that you can and will become enlightened in this life. Set the goal to reach paradise.
- 3.) Intend to help all beings. Set the goal to help limitless beings.

- 3.) **DOMPA LANG** **You take the vows based upon the prior two steps.**
vows take them

- 4.) **CHOKTU** **GUPA** **You respect them as the highest thing.**
as the highest thing respect

You have the vows and want to possess them and keep them. They are the most precious thing you have because they are the only way you are going to reach paradise. They are the only door and key to paradise. They are your helpmate and friend, not a punishment.

- 5.) **MIN** **GELWA** **To avoid breaking your vows, because of the feeling in #4.**
not break them

How to Confess Breaking Secondary Vows:

You can confess to a hinayana or mahayana practitioner. The person doesn't have to have bodhisattva vows, but must understand the situation and its gravity. The main point is that you're sincere and don't intend to do it again. You should do the confession regularly with someone else.

CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class 10, continued

Five Factors That Make a Deed (breaking a vow) More or Less Serious.

Ways of breaking a vow that affect how serious the break is:

- 1.) **Nature:** The nature of certain vows is that some of the vows are more serious or important than others, i.e. primary vs. secondary vows.
- 2.) **Instigator:** What was it that made you do it? The following instigators are arranged from least to most serious:
 - a.) Not knowing the vows - being careless, distracted, or forgetful.
 - b.) Having a klesha attack - your mind is temporarily overtaken by bad thoughts.
 - c.) Disrespect for your vows - thinking they're not important, etc. discounting the vow and breaking it knowingly.
- 3.) **Having the three poisons:** (These are in the mind all the time and are poisoning the mind)
 - 1.) **Ignorantly liking**, being attracted to, or not wanting to lose something, with the idea that you must protect, and grasp at it to keep the thing. That's karmically backwards. To have something, you must give. We ignorantly like the thing and behave karmically backwards and cause future problems for ourselves.
 - 2.) **Wanting to be separated from an undesirable object in an ignorant way.** Trying to get rid of it in a karmically wrong way - to dislike it, struggle with it, etc. That's karmically opposite what you should do. This idea poisons your mind all day long. When things happen that you don't like, you try to get out if it in the wrong way by disliking it, striking out, etc.
 - 3.) **Having ignorance about how things exist is the basis of the other two poisons.** This poison makes the other two happen. Not understanding the karma/emptiness relationship. The more of any or all of the three poisons that are present, the heavier the bad deed or breaking of the vow.
- 4.) **Object:** A **lighter** object (as an example - for killing) would be an animal, because it doesn't have as much mental capacity to understand and to become enlightened, as compared to a person. You've destroyed less of a basis of consciousness to be enlightened.

MI-AM MIR CHAKPA Killing a human or embryo is a **medium** object. A **heavy** human or human embryo object would be your parents.
- 5.) **Accumulation:** If you break 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 secondary vows (some small amount), and don't confess, it would be **less** serious. Breaking a larger number, which you can still count, is a **medium** seriousness. If you break more than you can count, multiple times, that is **heavy** seriousness.

CLASS NOTES

Course VII: The Vows of the Bodhisattva

Class 10, continued

Four Causes of Breaking Your Vows (things that make you break them)

- 1.) **Not knowing the vows.** The antidote is to become a master of the vows.
- 2.) **Carelessness, forgetting, laziness, etc.** The antidote is to be mindful, which means to remember them and to catch yourself when you slip up.
- 3.) **Klesha attack.** The bad thought grows in your mind, takes it over, and fills the majority of your mind. The antidote is to identify your worst mental affliction and work on it.
- 4.) **Disrespect for the vows and for the Buddha.** The antidote is to have respect. You will have respect when you receive benefit from the vows. If you keep the vows, you will have results and will respect their worth, based on the results. You won't get respect for the vows just by trying to behave respectfully.

In doing all the vows, you must do them at your own level. Don't do more than you are capable of. Know your limit and don't go over it. If you do too much and burn out or repudiate your efforts or good deeds, it's very bad. It's wrong to do more than you are capable of and thereby ruin your future chances by renouncing the vows and breaking them.

Keeping your vows means tracking them every day. *If you're not keeping track of which vows you break, you're not keeping the vows.*

Breaking a root vow freezes/blocks your ability to reach enlightenment (via seeing emptiness), and breaking a secondary vow impedes the ability to reach enlightenment.

If you're practicing Dharma and not much good is happening, it's because you're not keeping your vows. If you keep these vows, then incredible things will happen in your life. If you don't keep them, then nothing will happen.

Keeping these vows is a major cause to see emptiness directly. Keeping these vows is the only way to reach nirvana.

With all your vows, you must judge what to do or not to do to the best of your ability. If you misjudge, you don't break a root vow.