

CLEARING THE MIND IN SEVEN POINTS: NEW KADAM ROOT TEXT

(Edited with italicized comments by Pabongka Rinpoche;

headings in bold and notes in parentheses by translator.)

0) Dedication

To show the authentic source of these teachings, the greatness of their originator is proclaimed:

Homage to Great Compassion!

This essential nectar of precepts

Was transmitted from Serlingpa (Suvarnadvipa).

To generate respect for the precepts, the magnificence of the teachings is explained:

It resembles the sun, a diamond and a medicinal tree.

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

Is to turn the evolution of the five contaminated (aggregates)

Into the path to enlightenment!

1) Relying on the Preliminaries

Regarding the actual teaching by which students are guided gradually, the first of the seven topics is presenting the practice of relying on the preliminaries:

First learn the preliminaries (of self-determination and freedom:

Precious life; impermanence and death; causality of development; renunciation of cyclic life and determination to achieve personal freedom).

2a) Conceiving the Conventional Spirit of Enlightenment

Regarding the second point, the actual (practice) of cultivating the spirit of enlightenment, although among the two (sub-topics), the method of cultivating the ultimate spirit of enlightenment and the method of cultivating the conventional spirit of enlightenment, the majority of editions first present the method of cultivating the ultimate spirit of enlightenment, our (new) system follows the intention of the Savior Manjushri, Tsong Khapa the Great, as (explained) in (Horton Namkha Pal's fifteenth century) Mind-Clearing like Sunlight (and Yongdzin Yeshe Gyaltsan's eighteenth century) Ornament of Lobsang's Intent and Essence of Nectar. Although most of the thirty-one editions and (commentaries) present it afterwards, following his distinctive intention, we present the latter method first. Hence, we begin with the conventional spirit of enlightenment:

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

(And then) contemplate the kindness of all living beings.

Practice combining both giving and taking.

Start gradually with taking on your own (suffering).

Mount these two on the (out and in) breath.

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

Is the brief precept for the aftermath (in between meditations).

To foster mindfulness of this (teaching),

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

2b) Conceiving the Ultimate Spirit of Enlightenment

After reaching stability (in the conventional spirit), reveal the secret (ultimate).

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

Examine the uncreated nature of mind.

Even the remedy (the emptiness insight) itself is objectively free (of reality).

The actuality of the path rests in the fundamental realm (of clear light).

Between sessions, act as an illusory being: (emanation, hero archetype or illusion body).

3) Turning Adversity to Advantage

The third (point) is transforming adversity into a path to enlightenment:

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

Turn adversity into the path to enlightenment.

Apply meditation to whatever comes.

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

(Correction, cultivation, generosity, trust).

[By contemplating (all) illusions as the four bodies of enlightenment,

Emptiness is the unexcelled (means of) protection.]*

4) Integrating the Lifelong Practice

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

To distil the essence of (these) precepts

You must apply them with the five powers:

(Priming, weeding, seeding, nurturing, enduring).

(As) the Universalist teaching on transference (at death) is

These same five powers, their practice is vital.

5) Measuring Success on the Path

The fifth (point) is explaining the measure of having cleared the mind:

All teachings coalesce in a single intentionality.

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

Always rely exclusively on the happy mind.

The measure of having learned is the elimination (of obstructions).

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

(As an altruist, ethicist, ascetic, virtuoso or yogi).

When adept despite distractions, you have learned.

6) The (Eighteen) Commitments of Clearing the Mind

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

Always reflect on three principles:

(Humility, integrity and impartiality).

Transform your intent but stay as you are.

Don't mention (others') handicaps.

Don't even think about the limitations of others.

Purify your worst addiction first.

Give up any expectation of results.

Give up your diet of poison(ous habits).

Don't indulge self-righteousness.

Don't react to insults.

Don't wait in ambush.

Don't go for the jugular.

Don't put your burden on others.

Don't harbor false views.

Don't aim for the top of the heap.

Don't make your genius a demon.

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

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

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

Practice all yogas as one: (the yoga of great compassion).

Subdue all resistance with one (art: giving and taking).

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

(Motivation and confession/dedication).

Tolerate both (good and bad), whatever comes.

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

Master the three hardest (challenges):

(To expose, ameliorate and eliminate obstacles).

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

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

Make yourself triply inseparable (from the practice):

(In body, speech and mind).

Practice perfect impartiality towards objects (of desire, anger and indifference).

It is vital to learn profoundly and all-inclusively.

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

Don't depend on external conditions.

Take up the principal (practice) right now.

Don't be wrong-headed.

Don't be erratic.

Learn decisively.

Break free with both investigation and analysis.

Don't boast about practice.

Don't indulge frustration.

Don't be temperamental.

Don't expect thanks.

Conclusion

(The master) concludes by proclaiming his attainment of the spirit of enlightenment:

Because of my many aspirations,

I put an end to the tragedy of suffering,

And received these precepts to tame the self-habit;

Now (at last) I can die without regrets.

So (ends) the New Kadam root text and commentary of Clearing the Mind in Seven Points, which contains the essence of the abundant literature (on this topic). (Among the) enormous variety of its texts of unequal length, some, for the sake of instruction, append topical outlines that are more or less unfelicitous, (while) some rely on root texts (whose origins are) not well known, despite having varying degrees of renown. Our system, according to the oral transmission of the Savior Manjushri, Tsong Khapa the Great, compiles the central intended meaning of (three Geluk texts), Mind-Clearing Like Sunlight, Ornament of Lozang's Intent and The Essence of Nectar. Once such a text has emerged, what could be wrong with considering it at length? It was written by the

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

Colophon: This *Root Text of the Universal (Practice of) Refining the Mind in Seven Points (Thegs-po'i blo-'byong don bdun-ma rtsa-ba)* composed by Geshe Chekawa Yeshe Dorje (1101-75) was translated from the New Kadam edition compiled by the Geluk Master Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo (1878-1941) by Joe Loizzo, M.D., for the Nalanda Institute Class, The Gradual Path of Clearing the Mind, in the Spring of 2009.