

# ***The Seven Points of Mind-Training*** Geshe Chekawa Yeshe Dorje (1101–1175)

Several translations (see notes at end), interleaved and coloured.

## **The Seven Points (CT)**

1. The Preliminaries - which teach the support of all Dharma practice
2. The Actual (Meditation) Practice - training in Bodhicitta
3. The Transformation of Adverse Conditions into the Path of Enlightenment
4. The Utilization of the Practice (of Mind-Training) in One's Whole Life
5. The Signs of Proficiency in Mind-Training
6. The Commitments of Mind-Training
7. The Precepts of Mind-Training

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## ***The Seven Points of Mind-Training, in fifty-nine pieces of advice***

### **1 - The Preliminaries**

**The First Point: The Preliminaries - (AW1)**

**Point 1: The Preliminaries, which are a basis for Dharma practice - (CT)**

**The Groundwork. Instruction on what supports the Dharma - (KM)**

The Preliminaries (Four Thoughts that turn the mind towards Enlightenment)

**First, train in the preliminaries - (AW1) (AW2) i.e.**

A. The preciousness of human life

B. Death and impermanence

C. Actions and their results (karma)

D. The unsatisfactory nature of the cycle of existence (the suffering of all realms of samsara)

**1. First, train in the preliminaries - (CT)**

**First do the Groundwork - (KM)**

## 2 - The Actual Practice (Two aspects of Bodhicitta: ultimate and relative)

Training in the Bodhicittas - (AW1). Cultivating Ultimate and Relative Bodhicitta - (AW2)

Point 2: The Main Practice which is training in Bodhicitta - (CT)

The Actual practice (Training in Bodhicitta) - (KM)

[A. Developing Ultimate Bodhicitta: meditation in three phases: introduction, the body of the practice, and post-meditation.]

[Ultimate Bodhicitta - (KM):]

2.1 - Treat everything you perceive as a dream.

Consider the world as dreamlike - (AW1)

2. Regard all dharmas as dreams - (CT)

Look at all experience as a dream - (KM)

2.2 - Find the consciousness you had before you were born.

Investigate the nature of unborn awareness - (AW1)

3. Examine the nature of unborn awareness - (CT)

Examine the nature of unborn awareness - (KM)

2.3 - Let even the remedy itself drop away naturally.

Even the antidote itself is liberated in its own place - (AW1)

4. Self-liberate even the antidote - (CT)

Let even the remedy release naturally - (KM)

2.4 - Stay in the primeval consciousness, the basis of everything.

Establish the nature of the path in the sphere of the foundation of all - (AW1)

5. Rest in the nature of *ālaya*, the essence - (CT)

The essence of the path: rest in the basis of all experience - (KM)

2.5 - Between meditations, treat everything as an illusion.

Between meditation sessions act as an illusory being - (AW1)

6. In post-meditation, be a child of illusion - (CT)

In daily life, be a child of illusion - (KM)

## [B. Developing relative bodhicitta]

[Relative Bodhicitta - (KM):]

[Preparation: Guru Yoga, *metta bhavana* - (KM)]

[Meditation:]

2.6 - Tonglen: developing loving kindness and compassion. [As you breathe in, take in and accept all the sadness, pain, and negativity of the whole world, including yourself, and absorb it into your heart. As you breathe out, pour out all your joy and bliss: bless the whole of existence.]

Alternately practice sending and taking - (AW1)

7. Sending and taking should be practised alternately. These two should ride the breath - (CT)

Train in taking and sending alternately. Put them on the breath - (KM)

[Postmeditation - (KM):]

2.7 - [Understand your attachments, your aversions, and your indifference, and love them all, fusing temporary antidotes to the three poisons].

Three objects, three poisons, three roots of virtue - (AW1)

8. Three objects, three poisons, three seeds of virtue - (CT)

Three objects, three poisons, three seeds of virtue - (KM)

2.8 - Apply these proverbs in everything you do [reciting prayers in accord with this].

In all activities train with words - (AW1)

9. In all activities, train with slogans - (CT)

Use reminders in everything you do - (KM)

2.9 - When practicing unconditional acceptance, start with yourself.

10. Begin the sequence of sending and taking with yourself - (CT)

Begin the sequence of taking with you - (KM)

**3 - Using adversity to wake up** (To transform all unfavourable circumstances into the Path of Awakening)

**Transforming Adversity into an Aid to Spiritual Awakening** (AW2)

**Point 3: Transformation of Bad Circumstances into the Path of Enlightenment** - (CT)

**The Transformation of Adversity into the Path of Awakening** - (KM)

3.1 - When everything goes wrong, treat disaster as a way to wake up. [If it hurts, it is because we are still subject to our karma.]

When the environment and its inhabitants are enslaved by evil, turn unfavourable circumstances into the path of awakening - (AW1)

When the whole world is enslaved by vices, transform adversities into the path of spiritual awakening - (AW2)

11. When the world is filled with evil, transform all mishaps into the path of bodhi - (CT)

When misfortune fills the world and its inhabitants, make adversity the path of awakening - (KM)

**[Relative Bodhicitta: - (KM)]**

3.2 - Take all the blame yourself [i.e. relying on relative Bodhicitta - taking the suffering: all karma caused by our ego]

Blame everything on one thing - (AW1). Blame everything on one culprit - (AW2)

12. Drive all blames into one - (CT)

Drive all blame into one - (KM)

3.3 - Be grateful to everyone [i.e. relying on relative Bodhicitta - sending love: we need the experiences to improve ourself.

Meditate on great kindness toward everyone - (AW1). Reflect on the kindness of all those around you - (AW2)

13. Be grateful to everyone - (CT)

Be grateful to everyone - (KM)

**[Ultimate Bodhicitta: - (KM)]**

3.4 - Don't worry - there's nothing real about your confusion. [Rely on ultimate Bodhicitta; realise the real nature of the suffering/obstacle; interdependence & inseparability of appearances; emptiness, of the world and mind; of the three worlds ...]

Meditation on the deceptive appearances of the four bodies is unsurpassed in guarding emptiness - (AW1). By meditating on delusive appearances as the four embodiments, emptiness becomes the best protection - (AW2)

14. Seeing confusion as the four *kāyas* is unsurpassable *shūnyatā* protection - (CT)

The ultimate protection is emptiness; know what arises as confusion to be the four aspects of being - (KM)

The best strategy is to have four practices - (AW2)

15. Four practices are the best of methods - (CT)

The best way is to use the four practices (i.e. accumulating merit, confessing evil actions, Giving tormas to gods and demons, Offering tormas to dakinis and protectors - (KM)

3.5 - When something unexpected happens, in that very moment, treat it as a meditation [relying on relative Bodhicitta: use all experiences to practice taking and sending]

Whatever you encounter, immediately apply it to meditation - (AW1) (AW2)

16. Whatever you meet unexpectedly, join with meditation - (CT)

Work with whatever you encounter, immediately - (KM)

## 4 - Life and death

### A Synthesis of Practice for One Life - (AW2)

Point 4: Showing the utilisation of practice in one's whole life - (CT)

The utilisation of practice in one's whole life - (KM)

#### 4.1 - (What to do in Life)

The five forces (Condensed Practice in 5 Points):

[Commitment; Engagement; Continuity; Neutralise the influence of the ego; Pray to succeed in developing bodhicitta]

To synthesize the essence of this practical guidance, apply yourself to the five powers - (AW1) (AW2):

The power of resolution [to cultivate the two Bodhicittas]

The power of familiarization [with the practices of the two Bodhicittas]

The power of [gradually cultivating] the white seed.

The power of abandonment [of self grasping - a gradual process]

The power of prayer [like dedication to full enlightenment]

17. Practice the five strengths, the condensed heart instructions - (CT)

What to do during one's life. A summary of the essential instructions: Train in the five forces - (KM) [i.e. Impetus; Familiarisation; Virtuous seeds; Repudiation; Aspiration.]

#### 4.2 - (What to do at Death)

The Mahāyanā teaching on transferring consciousness is precisely these five powers, so your conduct is crucial - (AW2)

18. The *mahāyanā* instruction for ejection of consciousness at death is the five strengths: how you conduct yourself is important - (CT)

What to do at death. The Mahayana instructions for how to die are the five forces. Posture is important - (KM)

5 - Yardsticks [how to measure the efficiency off the chosen path and our progress] (Measurement)

The Criterion of Proficiency in Mind-Training - (AW2)

Point 5: Evaluation of Mind-Training - (CT)

The extent of proficiency in Mind-Training - (KM)

5.1 - All teachings have the same goal

All dharma is included in one purpose [is self-grasping decreasing?] - (AW1). The whole of Dharma is synthesized in one aim - (AW2)

19. All dharma agrees at one point - (CT)

All instructions have one aim - (KM)

5.2 - Follow the inner witness [about our relative progress] rather than the outer ones -

Maintain the chief of the two witnesses - (AW1). Attend to the chief of the two witnesses - (AW2)

20. Of the two witnesses, hold the principal one - (CT)

Two testimonies: rely on the important one - (KM)

5.3 - Always have the support of a joyful mind -

Rely continually on mental happiness alone [to judge the success of your practice] - (AW1). Constantly resort to a sense of good cheer - (AW2)

21. Always maintain only a joyful mind - (CT)

A joyous state of mind is a constant support - (KM)

5.4 - Practicing even when distracted is good training [when it has become a wholesome habit (as automatic as breathing) to develop the two Bodhicittas in every situation.]

22. If you can practice even when distracted, you are well trained - (CT)

Proficiency means you do it even when distracted - (KM)

## 6 - Commitments (Engagement in Mind-Training)

The Pledges of the Mind-Training - (AW2)

**Point 6: Disciplines of Mind-Training** - (CT)

**Commitments of Mind-Training** - (KM)

6.1 - Always observe these three points:

Always practice the three principles - (AW1). Always abide by three principles - (AW2):

23. Always abide by the three basic principles - (CT)

Always practice the three general principles - (KM):

a. Not to contravene any commitments we have already made in our spiritual practice [morality]

a. Do not contravene your commitments to training the mind - (AW2)

a. Do not break promises you have made in mind-training - (KM)

b. Not to allow our mind training to become ostentatious [bragging]

b. Do not have a sense of bravado in the Mind-Training - (AW2)

b. Refrain from scandalous acts - (KM)

c. Not to let the mind training become lopsided [done with partiality]

c. Do not have an uneven Mind-Training - (AW2)

c. Avoid being one-sided - (KM)

6.2 - Change your attitude, but stay natural [not showing off and expecting recognition]

Transform your desires, but remain as you are - AW. Shift your priorities but stay as you are - (AW2)

24. Change your attitude, but remain natural - (CT)

Change your intention, but behave naturally - (KM)

6.3 - Do not discuss defects [or faults of others, in order to boost our own self-esteem]

Speak not of degenerate qualities - (AW1). Do not speak of other's limitations - (AW2)

25. Don't talk about injured limbs - (CT)

Don't talk about others' shortcomings - (KM)

6.4 - Don't worry about other people

Think nothing about the other side - (AW1). Do not stand in judgement of others - (AW2)

26. Don't ponder others - (CT)

Don't dwell on others' problems - (KM)

6.5 - Work on your greatest imperfection first

[omitted in AW1 & AW2?]

27. Work with the greatest defilements first - (CT)

Work on your strongest reactions first - (KM)

6.6 - Abandon all hope of [egoistic] results

Abandon all hope for results - (AW1). Abandon all hope of reward - (AW2)

28. Abandon any hope of fruition - (CT)

Give up all hope for results - (KM)

6.7 - Give up poisonous food [virtuous actions based on grasping]

Abandon poisonous food - (AW1). Avoid poisonous food - (AW2)

29. Give up poisonous food - (CT)

Give up poisoned food - (KM)

6.8 - Don't be consistent [not being satisfied]

Do not devote yourself kindly to the central object - (AW1). Do not indulge in self-righteousness - (AW2)

30. Don't be so predictable - (CT)

Don't rely on a sense of duty - (KM)

6.9 - Don't indulge in malicious gossip.

Do not laugh at malicious jokes - (AW1). Do not engage in malicious sarcasm - (AW2)

31. Don't malign others - (CT)

Don't lash out - (KM)

6.10 - Don't wait in ambush

Do not wait at the narrow passageway - (AW1). Do not wait in ambush (AW2)

32. Don't wait in ambush - (CT)

Don't wait in ambush - (KM)

6.11 - Don't strike at the heart.

[omitted in AW1 & AW2?]

33. Don't bring things to a painful point - (CT)

Don't go for the throat - (KM)

6.12 - Don't put the yak's load on the cow.

Do not load the burden of a *dzo* on an ox - (AW1) (AW2)

34. Don't transfer the ox's load to the cow - (CT)

Don't put an ox's load on a cow - (KM)

6.13 - Remember - this is not a competition.

Do not direct yourself to the summit of the ascent - (AW1). Do not flatter your way to the top - (AW2)

35. Don't try to be the fastest - (CT)

Don't be competitive - (KM)

6.14 - Don't be sneaky.

Do not be devious - (AW1). Avoid pretence (AW2)

36. Don't act with a twist - (CT)

Don't make practice a sham - (KM)

6.15 - Don't abuse your divine power for selfish reasons.

Do not let the gods descend to the devil - (AW1). Do not bring a god down to the level of a demon - (AW2)

37. Don't make gods into demons - (CT)

Don't turn a god into a demon - (KM)

6.16 - Don't expect to profit from other people's misfortune.

Do not seek another's misery as a way to your own happiness - (AW1). Do not take advantage of another's misfortune - (AW2)

38. Don't seek others' pain as the limbs of your own happiness - (CT)

Don't look to profit from sorrow - (KM)

**7 - Guidelines** (Precepts of Mind-Training)

**The Precepts of the Mind-Training** - (AW2)

**Point 7: Guidelines of Mind-Training** - (CT)

**Guidelines of Mind-Training** - (KM)

7.1 - In all your activities, have a single purpose [i.e. two Bodhicittas]

Practice all yogas by means of one - (AW1). Synthesize all meditative practices in one (i.e. the Seven-Point Mind-Training) - (AW2)

39. All activities should be done with one intention - (CT)

Use one practice for everything - (KM)

7.2 - Solve all problems by accepting the bad energy and sending out the good  
[since all problems are related to ego-grasping.]

Counteract all withdrawal by means of one - (AW1). Respond in one way (to all bouts of dejection) - (AW2)

40. Correct all wrongs with one intention - (CT)

Use one remedy for everything - (KM)

7.3 - Renew your commitment when you get up and before you go to sleep-

There are two actions on two occasions. At the beginning and end - (AW1). There are two tasks, at the beginning and at the end. [i.e. establish our motivation at the beginning, and, at the end (of a day or action), dedicate the merit] - (AW2)

41. Two activities: one at the beginning, one at the end - (CT)

Two things to do: one at the beginning, one at the end - (KM)

7.4 - Accept good and bad fortune with an equal mind.

Whichever of the opposites occurs, be patient - (AW1). Bear whichever of the two occurs (felicity and adversity) - (AW2)

42. Whichever of the two occurs, be patient - (CT)

Whatever happens, good or bad, be patient - (KM)

7.5 - Keep your vows even at the risk of your life.

Guard the two at the cost of your life - (AW1) (AW2)

43. Observe these two, even at the risk of your life - (CT)

Keep these two, even if your life is at risk - (KM)

7.6 - Recognize your neurotic tendencies, overcome them, then transcend them.

Practice the three austerities - (AW1) (AW2) [i.e. 1. remembering; 2. averting; 3 cutting off the flow]

44. Train in the three difficulties - (CT)

Learn to meet three challenges - (KM)

7.7 - Find a teacher, tame the roving mind, choose a lifestyle that allows you to practice.

Acquire the three principal causes [of a flourishing spiritual practice] - (AW1) (AW2)  
[i.e. 1. receiving guidance; 2. devoting yourself to practice according to the guidance; 3. assembling outer and inner conditions necessary for practice]

45. Take on the three principal causes - (CT)

Foster three key elements - (KM)

7.8 - Love your teacher, enjoy your practice, keep your vows.

Cultivate the absence of three degenerations - (AW1). Cultivate three things without letting them deteriorate - (AW2) [i.e. 1. faith and reverence for one's mentor; 2. enthusiasm for training one's mind; 3. conscientiousness regarding one's pledges and precepts]

46. Pay heed that the three never wane - (CT)

Take care to prevent three kinds of damage - (KM)

7.9 - Focus your body, mind, and spirit on the path -

Be endowed with the three inseparables - (AW1). Maintain three things inseparably: [i.e. bodily, verbal and mental virtue] - (AW2)

47. Keep the three inseparable - (CT)

Engage all three faculties - (KM)

7.10 - Exclude nothing from your acceptance practice: train with a whole heart -

Train in all areas without partiality - (AW1)

48. Train without bias in all areas - (CT)

Train on every object without preference - (KM)

7.11 - Always meditate on whatever you resent -

Always meditate on those who make you boil - (AW1). Meditate constantly on the distinctive ones [i.e. adversaries] - (AW2)

49. It is crucial always to do this pervasively and wholeheartedly

Always meditate on whatever provokes resentment - (CT)

Always work on what makes you boil - (KM)

7.12 - Don't depend on how the rest of the world is.

Do not rely on other conditions - (AW1). Do not depend on other factors - (AW2)

50. Don't be swayed by external circumstances - (CT)

Don't depend on extraneous conditions - (KM)

7.13 - In this life, concentrate on achieving what is most meaningful.

Now practice what is (most) important - (AW1) (AW2)

51. This time, practice the main points - (CT)

Practice what's important now - (KM)

7.14 - Don't let your emotions distract you, but bring them to your practice.

Do not be contrary - (AW1). Make no mistake - (AW2)

52. Don't misinterpret - (CT)

Don't get things wrong - (KM)

7.15 - Don't let your practice become irregular.

Do not be erratic - (AW1) (AW2)

53. Don't vacillate - (CT)

Don't switch on and off - (KM)

7.16 - Train wholeheartedly.

Practice decisively - (AW1). Practice with total conviction - (AW2)

54. Train wholeheartedly - (CT)

Train wholeheartedly - (KM)

7.17 - Free yourself by first watching, then analysing.

Free yourself by means of investigation and analysis - (AW1) (AW2)

55. Liberate yourself by examining and analyzing - (CT)

Find freedom by probing and testing - (KM)

7.18 - Don't feel sorry for yourself.

Do not be boastful - (AW1). Do not try to make an impression - (AW2)

56. Don't wallow in self-pity - (CT)

Don't boast - (KM)

7.19 - Don't be jealous

Do not bind yourself with hatred - (AW1). Do not be bound by distemper - (AW2)

57. Don't be jealous - (CT)

Don't be hypersensitive - (KM)

7.20 - Stay focused.

Do not be fickle - (AW1). Don't be temperamental - (AW2)

58. Don't be frivolous - (CT)

Don't be impulsive - (KM)

7.21 - Don't expect any applause.

Do not desire gratitude - (AW1). Do not yearn for gratitude. - (AW2)

59. Don't expect applause. - (CT)

Don't expect thanks. - (KM)

## Concluding Verses

As the five kinds of decay spread,  
This practice changes them into the way of awakening,  
This instruction, the essence of elixir,  
Is a transmission from Serlingpa.  
The awakening of the karmic energy of previous training  
Aroused intense interest in me.  
Therefore, I ignored suffering and criticism  
And sought instruction for subduing ego-clinging.  
Now, when I die, I'll have no regrets. - (KM)

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### Notes on the translations

Slightly different translations by the same translator have appeared and the internet seems to have spawned yet more variants. Some translations include sub-headings, indicating e.g. which Bodhicitta perspective is operating: Ultimate or Relative, and have been included.

1. Shamar Rinpoche (Mipham Chokyi Lodro, 14th Sharmapa, 1952–2014) taught this several times and was translated differently on different occasions. The sources of the two translations included here, have not a been precisely identified. The first sometimes has a short additional explanation, included in brackets [ ]. A second translation is sometimes added here, and indicated in parentheses ( ). Shamar Rinpoche's recent publications include: *The Path to Awakening: A Commentary on Ja Chekawa Yeshe Dorje's Seven Points of Mind-Training* (Motilal Barnasidass 2009) and *The Path to Awakening* ed. and tr. Lara Braitstein (Delphinium - Harrison, Encino, 2014). The second has similarities with, and perhaps may have come from, the (French) Dhagpo Kagyu Ling website.
2. **(AW1)** B. Alan Wallace: *A Passage from Solitude* (1992), and **(AW2)** B. Alan Wallace: *Buddhism with an Attitude* (Snow Lion - Ithaca New York, Boulder Colorado, 2001, 2003 edition).
3. **(CT)** Chogyam Trungpa *Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving-Kindness* (Shambala, Boston, 1993). (The same translation, with numbers added (1-59), is also printed as an appendix in **(KM)** 4. Jamgön Kongtrül (pp.93-97), and also in Pema Chodron *The Places that Scare You* (2001) pp.125-128. This translation, without the numbers, is included in Chodron's commentary on the Seven-Point Mind-Training: *Start from Where You Are* (1994, 2001 ed.) (Further versions of Trungpa's translation may be found, as it appears that he copyrighted translations in 1981 and 1986, and these were presumably used as the basis of this revised translation, published in 1993.)
4. **(KM)** Jamgön Kongtrül *The Great Path of Awakening* tr. Ken McLeod (Shambala - Boston, 2005) (Includes significant revisions to McLeod's earlier edition of 1987, and both differ from Trungpa's translation **(CT)** 3, also included as an appendix. Further translations by Ken McLeod may also be found on-line.)

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