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# MIND TRAINING

*The Great Collection*

Translated by Thupten Jinpa

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# MIND TRAINING: THE GREAT COLLECTION

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### *Mind Training: The Great Collection*

Compiled by Shönu Gyalchok (ca. fourteenth–fifteenth centuries)  
and Könchok Gyaltzen (1388–1469)

Compiled in the fifteenth century, *Mind Training: The Great Collection* (*Theg pa chen po blo sbyong rgya rtsa*) represents the earliest anthology of a special genre of Tibetan spiritual literature known simply as “mind training” or *lojong* in Tibetan. Tibetans revere the mind training tradition for its pragmatic and down-to-earth advice, especially the teachings on “transforming adversities into favorable opportunities.” This volume contains forty-three individual texts, including the most important works of the mind training cycle, such as Serlingpa’s *Leveling out All Conceptions*, Atiśa’s *Bodhisattva’s Jewel Garland*, Langri Thangpa’s *Eight Verses on Mind Training*, and Chekawa’s *Seven-Point Mind Training*, together with the earliest commentaries on these seminal texts as well as other independent works. These texts expound the systematic cultivation of such altruistic thoughts and emotions as compassion, love, forbearance, and perseverance. Central to this discipline are the diverse practices for combating our habitual self-centeredness and the afflictive emotions and way of being that arise from it.

THE LIBRARY OF TIBETAN CLASSICS • VOLUME I

*Thupten Jinpa, General Editor*

# MIND TRAINING

*The Great Collection*



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## Message from the Dalai Lama

THE LAST TWO MILLENNIA witnessed a tremendous proliferation of cultural and literary development in Tibet, the “Land of Snows.” Moreover, due to the inestimable contributions made by Tibet’s early spiritual kings, numerous Tibetan translators, and many great Indian paṇḍitas over a period of so many centuries, the teachings of the Buddha and the scholastic tradition of ancient India’s Nālandā monastic university became firmly rooted in Tibet. As evidenced from the historical writings, this flowering of Buddhist tradition in the country brought about the fulfillment of the deep spiritual aspirations of countless sentient beings. In particular, it contributed to the inner peace and tranquillity of the peoples of Tibet, Outer Mongolia—a country historically suffused with Tibetan Buddhism and its culture—the Tuva and Kalmuk regions in present-day Russia, the outer regions of mainland China, and the entire trans-Himalayan areas on the southern side, including Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh, Kinnaur, and Spiti. Today this tradition of Buddhism has the potential to make significant contributions to the welfare of the entire human family. I have no doubt that, when combined with the methods and insights of modern science, the Tibetan Buddhist cultural heritage and knowledge will help foster a more enlightened and compassionate human society, a humanity that is at peace with itself, with fellow sentient beings, and with the natural world at large.

It is for this reason I am delighted that the Institute of Tibetan Classics in Montreal, Canada, is compiling a thirty-volume series containing the works of many great Tibetan teachers, philosophers, scholars, and practitioners representing all major Tibetan schools and traditions. These important writings will be critically edited and annotated and will then be published in modern book format in a reference collection called *The Library of Tibetan Classics*, with their translations into other major languages to be followed later. While expressing my heartfelt commendation for this noble project, I pray and hope that *The Library of Tibetan Classics* will not only make these

important Tibetan treatises accessible to scholars of Tibetan studies, but will create a new opportunity for younger Tibetans to study and take interest in their own rich and profound culture. Through translations into other languages, it is my sincere hope that millions of fellow citizens of the wider human family will also be able to share in the joy of engaging with Tibet's classical literary heritage, textual riches that have been such a great source of joy and inspiration to me personally for so long.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected loops and strokes, characteristic of the Dalai Lama's signature.

The Dalai Lama  
The Buddhist monk Tenzin Gyatso



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THE INSTITUTE OF TIBETAN CLASSICS expresses its deep gratitude to Barry J. Hershey, Connie Hershey, and the Hershey Family Foundation for funding the entire cost of this translation project.

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## Preface

THIS VOLUME CONTAINS the most important early works of the Tibetan spiritual genre of *mind training* (*lojong*). Compiled in the first half of the fifteenth century, *Mind Training: The Great Collection* features texts from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, many of which have had a lasting impact on the landscape of Tibetan culture, literature, and spiritual life, as well as on the psyche of the Tibetan people. The publication of this first-ever English translation of the *Great Collection* marks the realization of a long-held personal dream. This translation, volume 1 in *The Library of Tibetan Classics*, is actually the second volume to be issued in the series.

Two primary objectives have driven the creation and development of *The Library of Tibetan Classics*. The first aim is to help revitalize the appreciation and the study of the Tibetan classical heritage within Tibetan-speaking communities worldwide, the younger generation in particular who struggle with the tension between traditional Tibetan culture and the realities of modern consumerism. To this end, efforts have been made to develop a comprehensive yet manageable body of texts, one that features the works of Tibet's best-known authors and covers the gamut of classical Tibetan knowledge.

The second objective of *The Library of Tibetan Classics* is to help make these texts part of the global literary and intellectual heritage. In this regard, we have tried to make the English reader-friendly and, as much as possible, keep the body of the text free of unnecessary scholarly apparatus, which can intimidate general readers. For specialists who wish to compare the translation with the Tibetan original, page references of the critical edition of the Tibetan text are provided in brackets.

The texts in the thirty-volume series span more than a millennium—from the development of the Tibetan script in the seventh century to the first part of the twentieth century, when Tibetan society and culture first encountered industrial modernity. The volumes are thematically organized and cover sixteen categories of classical Tibetan knowledge: (1) teachings

specific to each Tibetan school, (2) the bodhisattva's altruistic ideal, (3) presentation of the ethics of the three codes, (4) generation and completion stages of the highest yoga tantra, (5) Perfection of Wisdom studies, (6) buddha-nature theory, (7) the Middle Way philosophy of emptiness, (8) logic and epistemology, (9) Abhidharma psychology and phenomenology, (10) the tenets of classical Indian philosophical schools, (11) advice on worldly affairs, (12) "gateway for the learned," which includes linguistics, poetry, and literature, (13) medicine, (14) astronomy and astrology, (15) Tibetan opera, and (16) history.

The first category includes teachings of the Kadam, Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyü, Geluk, and Jonang schools, of miscellaneous Buddhist lineages, and of the Bön school. Texts in these volumes have been largely selected by senior lineage holders of the individual schools. Texts in the other categories have been selected primarily on recognition of the historical reality of the individual disciplines. For example, in the field of epistemology, works from the Sakya and Geluk schools have been selected, while the volume on buddha-nature features the writings of Butön Rinchen Drup and various Kagyü masters. Where fields are of more common interest, such as the three codes or the bodhisattva ideal, efforts have been made to represent the perspectives of all four major Tibetan Buddhist schools. *The Library of Tibetan Classics* can function as a comprehensive library of the Tibetan literary heritage for libraries, educational and cultural institutions, and interested individuals.

Today I feel a profound sense of joy, satisfaction, and more importantly an honor to be able to offer this volume of most inspiring Tibetan spiritual texts in English translation. Numerous individuals and organizations have helped make this possible. First of all I would like to express my deepest appreciation and respects to all my teachers, especially His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Kyapjé Zemey Rinpoché. Both introduced the beautiful world of mind training to me in my years as a young novice monk in India. I would especially like to thank Barry J. Hershey, Connie Hershey, and the Hershey Family Foundation for their most generous support, without which the dream of creating *The Library of Tibetan Classics* could not have even begun to be realized. Barry's conviction in the value of The Institute of Tibetan Classics' work and his continued support have helped keep my own translation work on this volume on course.

I owe deep gratitude to several other individuals and organizations. Catherine Moore helped in the editing of some texts in their early drafts.

Gene Smith and his Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC) helped in obtaining some key texts, especially a scanned copy of Lechen's *History of the Kadam Tradition*. Geshe Lobsang Choedar, my co-editor for the critical edition of the Tibetan volume of the anthology, helped in comparing the different editions of the individual texts as well as assisted in the difficult task of sourcing the countless numbers of citations found in the Tibetan texts. The Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, India, provided full access to its library to the Tibetan editors of *The Library of Tibetan Classics*, including myself. My wife Sophie was always there with her warmth and emotional support, and has taken on the endless logistical and administrative chores of the Institute. Finally, I thank my editor at Wisdom David Kittelstrom for his most valuable and incisive editorial assistance that has helped improve the language of this volume. Whatever merit we may have gathered—by all of us who have been involved with this project—through these may all beings enjoy peace and happiness. May these Tibetan texts become a genuine offering of peace and happiness to all.

Thupten Jinpa  
Montreal, 2005





## Introduction

WITHIN THE VAST CORPUS OF Tibetan Buddhist literature is a genre of writings that stands out for its inspirational power, poignant fervor, and down-to-earth practicality, all of which have made these teachings dear to the Tibetan people for generations. I am referring to a collection of texts and their associated spiritual practices known simply as *lojong*, or “mind training,” which first appeared in the land of snows almost a millennium ago. The present volume is the first-ever complete English translation of *Mind Training: The Great Collection (Thekpa chenpo lojong gyatsa)*, the earliest anthology of the most important works of mind training. The heart of Tibetan mind training is the cultivation and enhancement of Mahayana Buddhism’s highest spiritual ideal, the generation of the awakening mind (*bodhicitta*)—the altruistic aspiration to attain perfect enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. More specifically, “mind training” or *lojong* refers to a specific approach to cultivating the awakening mind. That approach entails a disciplined process for radically transforming our thoughts and prejudices from natural self-centeredness to other-centered altruism.

### *The meaning of mind training*

The Tibetan term *lojong* (spelled *blo sbyong*) is composed of two syllables, *lo* and *jong*. *Lo* stands for “mind,” “thought,” or “attitudes,” while *jong* connotes several interrelated but distinct meanings. First, *jong* can refer to training whereby one acquires a skill or masters a field of knowledge. *Jong* can also connote habituation or familiarization with specific ways of being and thinking. Third, *jong* can refer to cultivating specific mental qualities, such as universal compassion or the awakening mind. Finally, *jong* can connote cleansing or purification, as in purifying one’s mind of craving, hatred, and delusion. All these different meanings carry the salient idea of transformation, whereby a process of training, habituation, cultivation, and cleansing

induces a profound transformation—a kind of metanoesis—from the ordinary deluded state, whose *modus operandi* is self-centeredness, to a fundamentally changed perspective of enlightened, other-centeredness.<sup>1</sup>

Broadly speaking, all the teachings of the Buddha and their associated commentarial explanations can be characterized as “mind training” in all four senses described above. However, what we are concerned with here is the emergence in Tibet of a specific genre of teaching. In this special usage, *mind training* refers to specific approaches for cultivating the altruistic awakening mind, especially through the practice of equalizing and exchanging of self and others as found in Śāntideva’s eighth-century classic, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*. When used in this sense, the term *mind training* represents an abbreviation of the fuller expression “mind training in the Mahayana (Great Vehicle)” or “Mahayana mind training.”<sup>2</sup>

Two famous short works of the Tibetan mind training genre are today well known to the English-speaking world, with numerous commentaries by contemporary Tibetan teachers translated into different languages. These are Langri Thangpa’s *Eight Verses on Mind Training* and Chekawa’s *Seven-Point Mind Training*, both of which are contained in the present volume together with translations of their earliest commentaries. Historically, the Tibetan mind training teachings evolved within the context of the emergence of the Kadam school following the founding of Radreng Monastery near Lhasa in 1056.

What are the early scriptural sources for the instructions of mind training? Sangyé Gumpa’s *Public Explication of Mind Training* contains a memorable passage that describes a brief exchange between Chekawa (1101–75) and his teacher, Sharawa. Having been intrigued by the powerful altruistic sentiments expressed in Langri Thangpa’s *Eight Verses*—such as “May I accept upon myself the defeat / And offer to others the victory”—Chekawa asks Sharawa whether these teachings have a scriptural basis. The teacher then cites some stanzas from Nāgārjuna’s *Precious Garland* and asks if there is anyone who does not accept the authority of Nāgārjuna.<sup>3</sup> It is in this work of Sé Chilbu, which is effectively a compilation of notes taken from Chekawa’s lectures, that we have the earliest known discussion of the scriptural sources of the mind training instruction. According to Chekawa, several sutras and early Indian treatises stand out as the primary sources of mind training teachings. Among the Mahayana sutras, those singled out are the *Ākāśagarbha Sutra*,<sup>4</sup> the *Teachings of Vimalakīrti Sutra*, the *Flower Ornament Scripture*, the *Teachings of Akṣayamati Sutra*, as well as the *Collection*

of *Aphorisms* (sometimes referred to as the Tibetan *Dhammapada*). Of the classical Indian treatises, those singled out are Nāgārjuna's *Precious Garland*, his *Discourse on the Wish-Fulfilling Jewel Dream*, Āryaśūra's *Garland of Birth Stories*, Maitreya's *Ornament of Mahayana Sutras*, Asaṅga's *Levels of the Bodhisattva*, and Śāntideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* and *Compendium of Training*. Of these, the two most important sources are undoubtedly Nāgārjuna's *Precious Garland* and Śāntideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

### *Key features of mind training*

A central theme of mind training practice is the profound reorientation of our basic attitude both toward our own self and toward fellow sentient beings, as well as toward the events around us. Presently, we tend not only to grasp at some kind of intrinsically real “self” that constitutes our true being but also to cherish the welfare of this true “me” at the expense of all others. The mind training teaching challenges us to reverse this process. The training involves a deep understanding of others as true friends—as “more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel,” as Langri Thangpa puts it in his *Eight Verses on Mind Training*—and the recognition that our true enemy lies inside ourselves, not outside. We feel hurt when someone insults us, disappointed when someone we love betrays us, outraged when provoked for no reason, pangs of jealousy when others are successful, all because of deep-seated self-cherishing. It is self-cherishing that opens us to these painful and undesirable experiences. So the mind training teachings admonish us to “Banish all blames to the single source. / Toward all beings contemplate their kindness.”

One of mind training's most memorable contributions to world spirituality is the practice of *tonglen*, or “giving and taking.” *Tonglen* is a seemingly simple meditation practice of giving away one's own happiness and good fortune to others and taking upon oneself their suffering and misfortune. Traditionally, the meditation is designed to enhance the cultivation of loving-kindness and compassion, two central ideals in Mahayana Buddhism. According to mind training, this practice is combined with our respiration, whereby when we breathe in, we imagine taking from all other beings their pain and misfortune, all their negative traits and behaviors. These are visualized in the form of streams of dark clouds, smoke, or even brackish water, which enter our body. Then, when we exhale, we imagine giving to others all

our happiness and good fortune, as well as our virtuous traits and behaviors. These are visualized in the form of white clouds, bright lights, and streams of nectar, which enter the bodies of other beings. The *Seven-Point Mind Training* presents this practice most succinctly: “Train alternately in giving and taking; / Place the two astride your breath.”

Since a key goal of mind training is the radical transformation of our thoughts, attitudes, and habits, the application of remedies against the various ills of the mind is a dominant theme. To begin with, there is the highly practical approach of tackling one’s coarsest mental afflictions first. Then comes the admonition to “overcome all errors through a single means,” namely compassion. In addition, one finds the critically important injunction to ensure the purity of both the initial motivation and the state of mind at the conclusion of a specific act. The *Seven-Point* expresses this injunction as “There are two tasks—one at the start and one at the end.” Finally, we are advised to make our own self the primary witness to our thoughts and actions, a principle aptly presented in the line “Of the two witnesses, uphold the primary one.” If, despite all of this, we still fail to recognize the ultimate nature of things as devoid of substantial reality and continue to fall prey to self-grasping, we are advised to learn to view all things from their ultimate perspective, as dreamlike and devoid of substantial reality. Given our deeply ingrained tendency to reify anything we deem worthy of attention, once our application of remedies proves successful, there is the danger of grasping at the remedies themselves and once again being caught in bondage. So we are told, “The remedy too is freed in its own place.”

On the path of spiritual transformation we are bound to confront all kinds of circumstances, both positive and negative. To be successful, we need a method whereby we can remain steadfast on our course. In this context, the mind training teaching excels brilliantly with the principle of transforming all adversities into the path. The *Seven-Point Mind Training* puts it this way: “When the world and its inhabitants are filled with negativity, / Transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment.” For example, if we are slandered by someone without any justifiable basis, we can see the situation as a precious opportunity to cultivate forbearance. If we are attacked by someone, we can view the assailant with compassion, seeing that he is possessed by the demon of mental afflictions, such as anger. The masters of the mind training teachings extend this principle to all possible situations. They speak of taking both success and misfortune onto the path, both joy and pain onto the path, both wealth and poverty onto the path, and so

on. In a beautiful stanza, the Kashmiri master Śākyaśrī, who came to Tibet at the beginning of the thirteenth century, writes:

When happy I shall dedicate my virtues to all;  
 May benefit and happiness pervade all of space!  
 When suffering I shall take on the pains of all beings;  
 May the ocean of suffering become dry!<sup>5</sup>

When we as spiritual practitioners learn to relate to all events in this radically transformed manner, we will then be able to fulfill the injunction “Cultivate the joyful mind alone.” We will possess something akin to the philosopher’s stone, for we will be able to transform every circumstance or event, whether positive or negative, into a condition favorable to our enhancement of altruism. No wonder the early mind training masters compare this teaching to an indestructible diamond, to the all-powerful sun, and to the mythological wish-granting tree. If we lived our lives according to the principles of mind training as instructed by the great masters of the tradition, we could then certainly relate to the sentiments expressed in the following by Chekawa:

Because of multiple aspirations,  
 I have defied the tragic tale of suffering  
 And have taken instructions to subdue self-grasping;  
 Now, even if I die, I have no remorse.

For me, and perhaps for many others too, one of the greatest attractions of the mind training teachings is their down-to-earth practicality. These teachings are unlike many other established teachings of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, such as the rigorously systematized approach of the *lamrim*, or stages of the path teachings, the somewhat mystical approach of Vajrayana-related mahāmudrā (great seal) and dzokchen (great perfection) teachings, or the highest yoga tantra meditations, with their ritualized deity-yoga visualizations. In fact, the masters of mind training extol its simplicity, lack of systematic organization, and absence of elaborations, such as poetic embellishment or verbosity. They rightly proclaim that all the transformations that take place through mind training do so discreetly yet in great strides. Even a single line can be seen as encapsulating the entire teaching of the Buddha, for even a single statement of mind training has the power to

subdue self-cherishing and the mental afflictions. Unlike in other teachings, in mind training there are no complicated structure, no confusing outlines, nor is any complex reasoning process called for.

Right from the earliest stages of their development, the mind training teachings became a shared heritage of all the major schools of Tibetan Buddhism. It is no wonder today, as interest in Tibetan spiritual teaching and insights grow worldwide, that the mind training teachings are the ones most shared with the outside world by the Tibetan teachers, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama. I vividly remember the beautiful morning of August 15, 1999, when nearly one hundred thousand people from all walks of life gathered in New York's Central Park to listen to the Dalai Lama's exposition of the *Eight Verses on Mind Training*. As on many of the Dalai Lama's trips to English-speaking countries, on that day too I had the privilege to sit beside him as his official translator. The atmosphere was pervaded by a stillness of attention, deep spiritual presence, and a shared experience of warmth toward all things living, and those present felt—at least for an hour and a half—that they had touched something deep within themselves.<sup>6</sup>

### *Origin of the mind training teachings*

The Tibetan tradition attributes the origin of mind training to the Indian master Atiśa Dīpaṃkara of Vikramaśīla Monastery, who came to Tibet in the first half of the eleventh century. Atiśa's journey to Tibet, his long and close relationship with his principal disciple Dromtönpa, his composition of the highly influential work *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, his contributions to the translation into Tibetan of major Indian Buddhist classics, and his critical role in what came to be later defined as the “latter dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet” are all well chronicled. What is not clear is whether Atiśa is personally responsible for the emergence of the mind training teaching we know today. Atiśa did not use the expression *mind training* in the manner defined above in any of his more well-known writings. Even Atiśa's own short mind training text, entitled the *Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland*, the first entry in our present volume, does not carry the term in its title or colophon. Similarly, the expression does not appear in any of the “mind training” works attributed to Atiśa's Indian teachers, such as the *Wheel of Sharp Weapons*, all of which are featured in our volume. The earliest known texts that explicitly carry the term are Langri Thangpa's *Eight Verses on Mind Training*<sup>7</sup> and Chekawa's *Seven-Point Mind Training*, both of which appeared about a century after Atiśa.

So who exactly is the author of the first mind training work? How far back can we trace the usage of the expression *mind training* in the manner defined above? We can defer the first question for now, as addressing it requires an analysis of the origin of the *Seven-Point Mind Training*, and look instead at the origin of modern use of the expression *mind training*.

There do appear to be clear references to “mind training” in the writings of Dromtönpa, Atiśa’s chief disciple, in the manner we understand today. Chekawa, in his commentary to the *Eight Verses*, cites the following from Dromtönpa:

In Kham, I went to visit the teacher Sherapbar, a friend close to my heart. I went knowing he had not invited me, and he took offense at this and sent me away. He ordered others to remove all my belongings, and he himself locked me in a dark room. That was when it became clear whether I had trained my mind in loving-kindness and compassion, and whether the lines “May their sufferings ripen upon me; / May all my happiness ripen upon them” had remained a lie for me.<sup>8</sup>

The use of the term *mind training* or *lojong* for a specific approach to the cultivation of the awakening mind, especially on the basis of equalizing and exchanging self and others, is even more explicit in the writings of Potowa, a primary student of Dromtönpa. In his letter to a student, the famous Kadam master Neusurpa, Potowa writes:

The stages of mind training, once taught in secret,  
Are today being proclaimed in public.  
The stages of the path meditations that begin with death—  
Today not even their names exist anymore.<sup>9</sup>

So the understanding that within Atiśa’s instructions there are two distinct approaches—stages of the path (which was taught publicly) and mind training (which was taught in secret)—goes back to the earliest framing of Atiśa’s instructions. In other words, the tradition of distinguishing between two specific sets of instructions stemming from Atiśa—the stages of the path approach, grounded upon Atiśa’s work *Lamp for the Path*, and the mind training approach, based on equalizing and exchanging self and others—seems to have evolved early in the development of the Kadam school. Later historians identify two distinct lineages of Atiśa’s Kadam school—(1) the

Kadam lineage of treatises and (2) the Kadam lineage of instructions. Sometimes this list is expanded to include three, with (3) being the Kadam lineage of pith instructions.<sup>10</sup> Both stages of the path and mind training belong to the second of these three lineages.

### *Atiśa's three masters of the awakening mind*

One critical element of the traditional account of the origins of the mind training teaching is the story of the “three masters” from whom Atiśa is said to have received instructions on awakening mind. Once again, Chekawa’s teaching, as penned by his student Sé Chilbu, is an important source for the legend. According to this story, Atiśa received instructions on the generation of awakening mind from three different Indian masters. The first is the teacher Dharmarakṣita, a yogi who happened to uphold the philosophical standpoint of the Vaibhāṣika school and whose compassion was so great that he once cut off a piece of his own flesh and gave it to a sick man as medicine.<sup>11</sup> The second is Kusālī Jr., a dedicated yogi of Maitreya, who is therefore sometimes called Maitrīyogi. Finally, there is Serlingpa Dharmakīrti, whom Atiśa is said to have deliberately sought by braving a twelve-month sea voyage to the Indonesian island of Sumatra. The question is, what was Chekawa’s source for his account of the three distinct lineages of awakening mind that Atiśa is believed to have received? How early can we trace the story?

The story may be traceable to Atiśa himself, at least as told by his student Dromtönpa. In an extract from Atiśa’s advice to Naljorpa Sherap Dorjé and Jvalamati, Dromtönpa identifies two distinct approaches in the training of one’s mind in the cultivation of great compassion. One is to first cultivate a deep sense of equality between self and others and then move on to the next stage of exchanging self and others. This, Dromtönpa states, is the tradition of the teacher Dharmarakṣita. In contrast, he says, exchanging self and others right from the start is the approach of master Serlingpa.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, no mention is made of the approach of Atiśa’s third teacher on awakening mind, Maitrīyogi or Kusālī, Jr. However, we find in Chekawa, and especially later in Thokmé Sangpo, an allusion to a statement by Chengawa that first equalizing and then exchanging self and others is the approach of the teacher Maitrīyogi.<sup>13</sup> In the absence of further evidence, it is difficult to speculate who is responsible for introducing the legend of Atiśa’s three awakening mind gurus. My own feeling is that it is traceable at least to

Dromtönpa, if not directly to Atiśa himself. In any case, all textual sources agree in recognizing Serlingpa as Atiśa's most important awakening mind teacher and therefore the true source of his mind training teachings.

Who, then, is Serlingpa?<sup>14</sup> All biographies of Atiśa state that whenever he would utter Serlingpa's name, tears would fall down his cheeks. They report that Atiśa exclaimed that whatever degree of good heart he possessed was due entirely to Serlingpa.<sup>15</sup> The present volume contains an interesting if somewhat mythological account of Atiśa's long sea voyage to Sumatra, where he went to meet with Serlingpa.<sup>16</sup> Apart from this account, few texts provide any clear depiction of Serlingpa. That he was a Buddhist scholar of great stature in the tenth and eleventh centuries remains beyond doubt.<sup>17</sup> Six works by Serlingpa Dharmakīrti, most of which were in fact translated under the personal supervision of Atiśa himself, are included in the Tengyur, the Tibetan collection of canonical treatises. Of these, the most notable works are Serlingpa's commentary on Maitreya's *Ornament of Clear Realizations* and various treatises on Śāntideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* and *Compendium of Trainings*. So, regardless of how much of the narrative of Atiśa's voyage to Sumatra and his subsequent tutelage under Serlingpa in the later biographies is true, there is no doubt that it is Serlingpa's teaching on the awakening mind that forms the core of Atiśa's mind training instructions.

From the beginning of the twelfth century, especially after the codification of Atiśa's scattered teachings on mind training by Sharawa and Chekawa into the well-known seven points, master Serlingpa's instructions on the cultivation of awakening mind as transmitted to Atiśa have effectively formed the kernel of the Tibetan mind training teachings. This seven-point approach became so influential that for many later authors, especially after the fifteenth century, Chekawa's *Seven-Point Mind Training* became almost equivalent to mind training itself.<sup>18</sup> It is to this influential short text that we now turn our attention. In doing so, we can also begin to address the question of the authorship of the first mind training work.

### *Seven-Point Mind Training*

Without a doubt, Chekawa was one of the first teachers, if not the first, who presented the key elements of Atiśa's mind training instructions in terms of seven key points. The earliest work we have that presents this is Chekawa's teachings on the seven points as compiled by his student Sé Chilbu. This,

however, does not mean that Chekawa was the first to organize the teaching of mind training according to this schema.<sup>19</sup> The seven points are as follows: (1) presentation of the preliminaries, (2) training in the two awakening minds, (3) taking adversities onto the path of enlightenment, (4) presentation of a lifetime's practice in summary, (5) the measure of having trained the mind, (6) the commitments of mind training, and (7) the precepts of mind training.

That Chekawa did not actually write all the lines of the *Seven-Point* in the sense of an author composing his own original work appears fairly certain. To begin with, at least two versions of so-called root lines of mind training exist—almost all lines of which find their way into the *Seven-Point*. Both versions are attributed to Atiśa and appear in our present anthology. In addition, at least two different pre-fourteenth-century expositions of mind training are featured in this volume, and neither makes any reference to the seven-point framework. One is the beautifully succinct work entitled simply *A Mahayana Mind Training*, which appears to come from the lineage of Jayülwa, which is different from that of Chekawa. The other work is the famous *Public Explication* of Sangyé Gompa, where the root lines are explained in terms of (1) the bodylike main part and (2) its branches. The first part is in turn divided into the preliminary, the actual, and the concluding practices. The root lines embedded within these two guide texts are different enough from Chekawa's *Seven-Point* to warrant their recognition as representing different redactions of the root lines on mind training. So, effectively, we have the following extant redactions of the root lines on mind training, all but the last of which appears in the present anthology:

1. *Root Lines*
2. *Annotated Root Lines*
3. Root lines embedded in Chekawa's *Seven-Point Mind Training*
4. Root lines embedded in *A Mahayana Mind Training*
5. Root lines embedded in Sangyé Gompa's *Public Explication*
6. Versified redaction root lines in Shönu Gyalchok's *Compendium of All Well-Uttered Insights*

These root lines differ significantly from each other in terms of their length, ordering of the lines, subtle divergences even in what appear to be the same lines, differences in versification, and so on. However, it seems fairly certain that all these redactions originate from a common source. It is difficult, however, to determine who the actual author of these seminal lines

may be and who first compiled them together into a cohesive text. It does appear that Atiśa never actually explicitly authored a mind training text in the sense of a coherently organized work. These lines are most probably based on spontaneous instructions that Atiśa gave to different individuals on numerous occasions and that were later compiled by various teachers into oral transmissions so that they would not be lost.<sup>20</sup> Their origin in oral transmissions is evident from their brevity and vernacular style. It is perhaps also due to this oral origin that so many redactions of the root lines came about, some of which do not demonstrate any familiarity with the others. Based on the antiquity of their style of presentation, my own guess is that the two versions of the root lines featured in the present anthology may be the earliest versions. It is on the basis of some of these different redactions that Chekawa, drawing on the instructions of his teacher Sharawa, organized the root lines according to the so-called seven points of mind training. Over the years, this seven-point instruction came to dominate both the pedagogy and the commentarial tradition of Atiśa's mind training teachings.

That the mind training teaching originated in a scattered oral tradition of Atiśa's instructions appears to be recognized also by the author of what is effectively the earliest history of the Kadam tradition. In his *History of the Precious Kadam Tradition*, Tibetan author Sönam Lhai Wangpo (fifteenth century) lists four different categories of master Atiśa's teachings: (1) those pertaining to the stages of the path, (2) scattered sayings, (3) epistles, and finally (4) the various pith instructions. Within this fourfold division, the author lists the entire collection of mind training teachings as belonging to the second class, namely scattered sayings.<sup>21</sup> It is probably also for this reason that the root lines on mind training do not appear among the works attributed to Atiśa in the Tengyur. For until these scattered sayings were compiled together into a coherent text, no such work called the *Root Lines on Mind Training* existed. Almost all Tibetan sources agree that Langri Thangpa, and later Chekawa, were responsible for bringing the "secret" mind trainings teaching into the wider public domain.<sup>22</sup>

Following the organization of the root lines on mind training into the seven key points, the *Seven-Point Mind Training* effectively became the root text of Atiśa's mind training teachings. This short text attracted numerous commentaries from many great Tibetan teachers, such as the following well-known ones:

1. Sé Chilbu's (twelfth century) commentary compiled from Chekawa's own lectures (featured in this anthology)

2. Thokmé Sangpo's (fourteenth century) commentary
3. Shönu Gyalchok's (fourteenth century) *Compendium of All Well-Uttered Insights*
4. Könchok Gyaltsen's (fifteenth century) *Supplement to Oral Transmission* (featured in this anthology)
5. Radrengpa's (fifteenth century) *Stream of the Awakening Mind*
6. Hortön Namkha Pal's (fifteenth century) *Mind Training: Rays of the Sun*
7. The First Dalai Lama Gendün Drup's (fifteenth century) *Lucid and Succinct Guide to Mind Training*
8. Khedrup Sangyé Yeshé's (sixteenth century) *How to Integrate into One's Mind the Well-Known Seven-Point Mind Training*
9. Kalden Gyatso's (seventeenth century) *Dispelling the Darkness of Mind*
10. Yongzin Yeshé Gyaltsen's (eighteenth century) *Essence of Ambrosia*
11. Ngülchu Dharmabhadra's (eighteenth century) *Heart Jewel of the Bodhisattvas*
12. Jamyang Khyentse's (nineteenth century) *Seeds of Benefit and Well-Being*

The historian Lechen identifies two distinct traditions of the teaching of *Seven-Point Mind Training*. One is the so-called northern lineage that stems from Rampa Lhadingpa and later Radrengpa, while the other, the southern lineage, stems from Thokmé Sangpo.<sup>23</sup> The key difference between these two lineages lies in their interpretation of the following well-known line from the root text: “Place your mind on the basis of all, which is the actual path.” The southern-lineage proponent, such as Thokmé Sangpo, reads “the basis of all” as the uncontrived natural mind, while the northern-lineage proponents, such as Radrengpa, read it as emptiness. According to Yeshé Döndrup, Shönu Gyalchok's approach combines both lineages, thus making a third approach to the teaching of *Seven-Point*.<sup>24</sup> At the beginning of the fifteenth century, thanks to Namkha Pal and Radrengpa's composition of their commentaries on the *Seven-Point Mind Training*, a unique transmission of the *Seven-Point* based upon the ear-whispered teachings of the great Tsongkhapa came into being.

Due to this diversity in the presentation of the instructions of the *Seven-Point Mind Training*, several different redactions of the *Seven-Point* evolved.<sup>25</sup> There are some variations in the length of these different versions, with certain lines appearing in some yet not in others. In addition, some

versions present the training in the cultivation of the ultimate awakening mind in the beginning part, while others follow Sangyé Gompa's approach and present the ultimate awakening mind toward the end.<sup>26</sup> Atiśa's mind training teachings became a particularly dominant element of pedagogy and practice in the Geluk school, giving rise to some noteworthy original works on mind training. These include Tsongkhapa's beautiful verse work *Mind Training in Ornamental Words*, Chenga Lodrö Gyaltzen's *Opening the Door of Dharma*, his *Mind Training on Forbearance*, his root text and autocommentary on *Mind Training in Altruistic Aspirations*, and Yongzin Yeshé Gyaltzen's *Ornament of Lobsang's Thought*.

### *Compilation of the present anthology*

A few words about the compilation of our present anthology are in order. The original Tibetan xylograph text, which was the basis of the critical edition produced by the Institute of Tibetan Classics, appears to have been printed during the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, probably at the beginning of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, we have no information as to what texts that edition was based upon. The colophon simply refers to the volume as "The instructions on awakening mind known as *Mind Training: The Great Collection*, which was compiled together by the great bodhisattva Shönu Gyalchok and the great Mü master Könchok Gyaltzen." To date, I have failed to locate any biographical material on Shönu Gyalchok other than the brief note in Lechen's *History of the Kadam Tradition* (p. 307a–b). He is said to have studied with numerous noted fourteenth-century thinkers, including Tsongkhapa and Yakdé Pañchen, but received the mind training instructions from a direct student of Thokmé Sangpo called Tsültrim Pal. As for Könchok Gyaltzen (1388–1469), there is an "official" biography in volume 1 of the *lamdré* cycle of texts. This biography contains a brief reference to how Shönu Gyalchok conferred the entire transmission of mind training teachings on Könchok Gyaltzen and effectively appointed him his successor in the transmission of these mind training teachings.

Whether the present version of our mind training anthology really is the original volume compiled by the two masters or is a later expanded and modified version is unclear. There appear to be at least three different versions of *The Great Collection*. First is the present version. However, the eighteenth-century Geluk author Longdöl Ngawang Lobsang enumerates seventeen sets of mind training texts within the great collection compiled

by Shönu Gyalchok.<sup>27</sup> His list does not contain many of the entries of the present volume, including Atiśa's *Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland*, Sé Chilbu's commentary on the *Seven-Point Mind Training*, and Sangyé Gompa's *Public Explication* along with its supplement by Könchok Gyaltzen. Longdöl's enumeration is corroborated by Yeshé Döndrup, who states that Shönu Gyalchok compiled around thirty extant mind training texts into a single volume.<sup>28</sup> Finally, Jamgön Kongtrül appears to use a different version of the anthology as the basis for the mind training cycle of texts included in volume 2 of his *Treasury of Instructions*. Unfortunately, Kongtrül does not tell us what edition he used. We do not even know whether the texts he included in his *Treasury of Instructions* represent the entire anthology or a further selection. The *Treasury* collection does not include Sangyé Gompa's *Public Explication* and its supplement by Könchok Gyaltzen, Yangönpa's short mind training instruction, *Heart of Dependent Origination*, as well as the entire set of texts on *Parting from the Four Clings*.<sup>29</sup> In the absence of further textual resources and after consultation with the records of teachings received by numerous Tibetan masters, it is difficult to make an informed determination on this question of the earliest version of the anthology.

I propose that the original basis for our present anthology of mind training texts is the final section of Shönu Gyalchok's *Compendium of All Well-Uttered Insights*. Toward the end of this long work, the author provides an extensive list as well as extracts, and in some cases complete renderings, of numerous mind training texts. If we read Shönu Gyalchok's treatment of the various mind training texts carefully, we can recognize the overall structure and theme of the present anthology. After providing a version of Atiśa's *Root Lines* (equivalent to entries 4 and 5 of our anthology), he lists five broad categories of what he calls essential supplementary instructions: (1) In the first category, Shönu Gyalchok includes the short biographical works on Atiśa, such as his renouncing of his kingdom and his voyage to Sumatra (entries 2 and 3 in our present anthology), (2) while in the second he includes supplementary instructions on the practice of ultimate awakening mind but does not list any specific texts. (3) In the third category he lists the instruction of the *Eight Sessions of Mind Training* (entry 22 of our volume) as well as *Samantabhadra's Mind Training* (entry 21). (4) In the fourth category, Shönu Gyalchok includes the well-known teaching *Leveling Out All Conceptions*, both the root text and its commentary (entries 12 and 32), which are believed to have been given to Atiśa by Serlingpa specifically to tame people in barbarian borderlands. (5) The fifth category of

instructions he calls miscellaneous mind instructions, which include Virvapa's mind training (entry 28); Kusulu's merit accumulation (entry 18); Śākyaśīr's instruction on taking joys and suffering onto the path (entry 19); instructions on taking afflictions onto the path (entry 13), on purifying grudges (entry 16), and on purifying negative karma (entry 15); as well as advice to Namdak Tsuknor (entry 27) and Chim Namkha Drak's mind training in one session (entry 26). This is then followed by extracts from the mind training works attributed to Atiśa's three Indian awakening mind teachers (entries 8, 9, 10, and 11), which in turn is followed by a full citation of Langri Thangpa's *Eight Verses on Mind Training*.<sup>30</sup>

Since Shönu Gyalchok offers only a list or extracts of most of these texts in his *Mind Training: Compendium of All Well-Uttered Insights*, it was probably either his student Könchok Gyaltzen or both teacher and student together who brought into a single volume the complete texts of all the mind training works listed. To this were then added (either by them or by a later editor) Atiśa's *Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland* and the remaining additional texts. Whatever the actual facts of these diverse redactions, today the present anthology is universally recognized as the authentic *Mind Training: The Great Collection (Lojong gyatsa)*.<sup>31</sup>

The texts in *Mind Training: The Great Collection* represent the flowering of an important spiritual culture dedicated to the perfection of the human heart by cultivating the altruistic intention. In their birthplace of Tibet, these spiritual writings have inspired, nurtured, and transformed the hearts of millions of individuals across many generations. Even though the first mind training text emerged nearly a millennium ago, these simple yet profound teachings have retained their appeal and poignancy. By making these teachings available in translation, my hope is that many more individuals will be able to share in the wonderful insights of the Tibetan mind training teachings.





## Technical Note

The name of the Tibetan text is *Theg pa chen po blo sbyong rgya rtsa*, and the original xylograph edition used as the basis of this translation is a rare copy of the Lhasa Shöl edition archived by the library of the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi, India (acquisition no. 16767). In the publisher's dedication of the Tibetan text, Shönu Gyalchok and München Könchok Gyaltzen are listed as the compilers of this volume.

Bracketed numbers embedded in the text refer to page numbers of the new critical and annotated Tibetan edition published in modern book format by The Institute of Tibetan Classics in New Delhi (2004, ISBN 81-89165-01-1) as volume 1 of the series entitled *Bod kyi gtsug lag gces btus*.

All Tibetan names in the main body of text are rendered phonetically in accordance with a style sheet developed by the Institute of Tibetan Classics and Wisdom Publications especially for the *Library of Tibetan Classics* series. There is a correspondence table at the back of the book where transliterated spellings can be found. Sanskrit diacriticals are used throughout, except for naturalized Sanskrit terms such as *sutra*, *mandala*, and *nirvana*.

### *Pronunciation of Tibetan phonetics:*

*ph* and *th* are aspirated *p* and *t*, as in *pet* and *tip*.

*ö* is similar to the *eu* in French *seul*.

*ü* is similar to the *ü* in the German *füllen*.

*ai* is similar to the *e* in *bet*.

*é* is similar to the *e* in *prey*.

### *Pronunciation of Sanskrit:*

Palatal *ś* and retroflex *ṣ* are similar to the English unvoiced *sh*.

*c* is an unaspirated *ch* similar to the *ch* in *chill*.

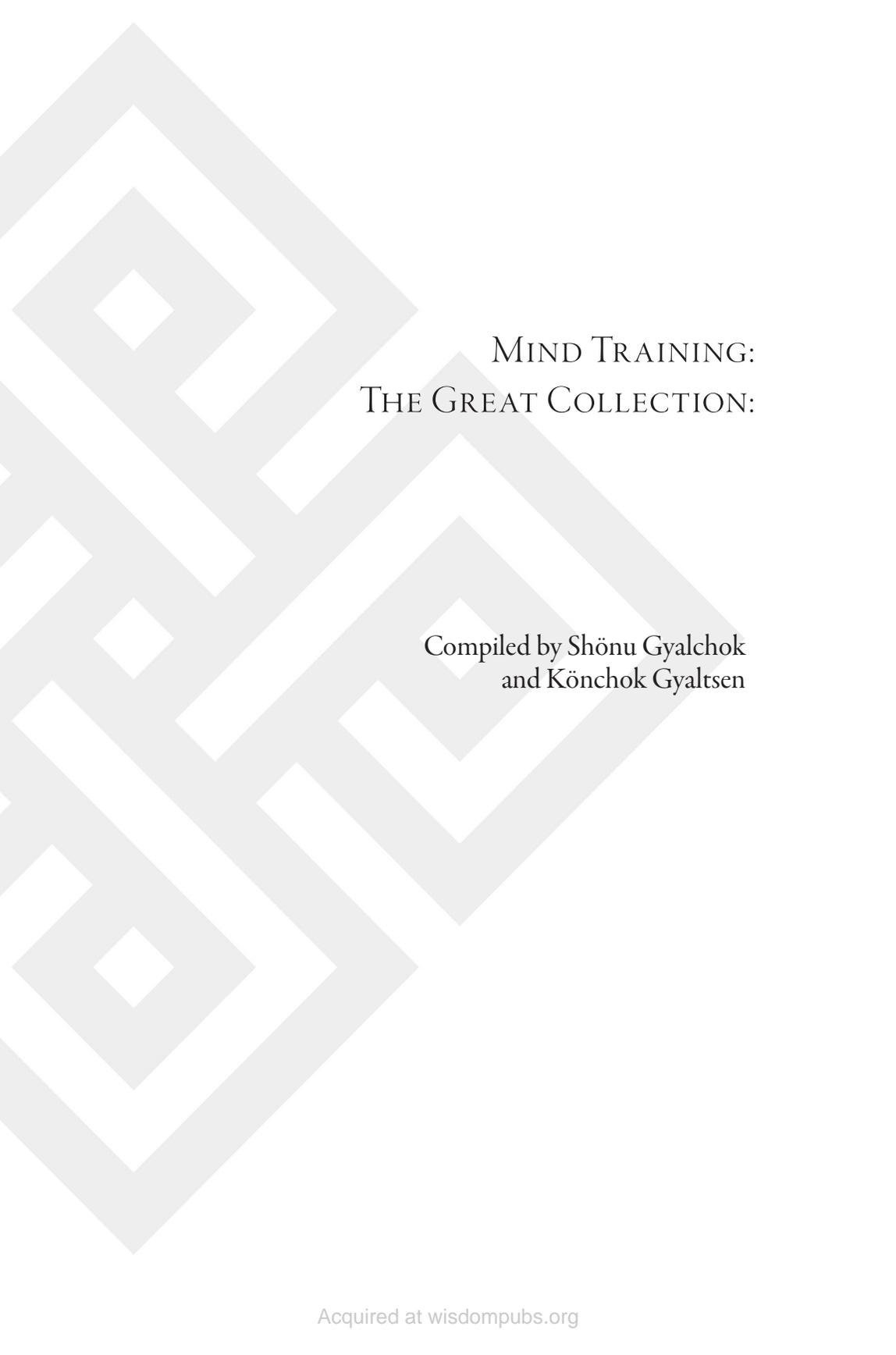
The vowel *r̄* is similar to the American *r* in *pretty*.

*ñ* is somewhat similar to a nasalized *ny* in *canyon*.

*ṅ* is similar to the *ng* in *sing* or *anger*.

In the Tibetan original of three texts (entries 5, 34, and 37), there are annotations inserted into the main body of the text in small fonts. While the annotations to entry 5 are extensive and may in fact be considered an integral part of the actual text, the annotations inserted in entries 34 and 37 appear to be, for the most part, attempts (by a later editor) to identify the texts from which citations are made yet whose titles are not mentioned by the author. In my translation I have treated the annotations of entry 5 as integral to the text and have therefore faithfully produced an equivalent annotated root text in English. For this, I have highlighted the actual “root lines” in bold while keeping the annotations inserted in between the root lines in normal fonts so that the two—the root text and the annotations—can be read interspersed. All other annotations inserted in the various Tibetan texts appear in my translation in parentheses. In contrast, additions made to help facilitate the reading of the English translation are provided in brackets.

In the critical edition of the volume published by the Institute of Tibetan Classics, the individual texts of the collection have been compared against those found in the collected works of the individual authors, their commentaries, or in other anthologies, especially Jamgön Kongrül’s *Gdams ngag mdzod* (vol. 2), where many of the mind training texts are featured. The variant readings of these different editions are fully annotated in the critical Tibetan edition. In my translation I have only referred to those variances that are significant and alter the reading of the texts. The referencing of the numerous citations from Kangyur and Tengyur and the works of Tibetan masters has been, on the whole, based on The Institute of Tibetan Classics’ new critical edition.



MIND TRAINING:  
THE GREAT COLLECTION:

Compiled by Shönu Gyalchok  
and Könchok Gyaltzen



# 1. Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland<sup>32</sup>

*Atiṣa (982–1054)*

Sanskrit title: *Bodhisattvamaṇevalī*

Homage to great compassion.

Homage to the teachers.

Homage to the faith divinities.

1

Discard all lingering doubts,  
And strive with dedication in your practice.  
Thoroughly relinquish sloth, mental dullness, and laziness,  
And strive always with joyful perseverance.

2

With mindfulness, vigilance, and conscientiousness,  
Constantly guard the gateways of your senses.  
Again and again, three times both day and night,  
Examine the flow of your thoughts.

3

Reveal your own shortcomings,  
But do not seek out others' errors.  
Conceal your own good qualities,  
But proclaim those of others.

4

Forsake wealth and ministrations;  
At all times relinquish gain and fame.  
Have modest desires, be easily satisfied,  
And reciprocate kindness.

5

Cultivate love and compassion,  
And stabilize your awakening mind.  
Relinquish the ten negative actions,  
And always reinforce your faith.<sup>33</sup>

6

Destroy anger and conceit,  
And be endowed with humility.  
Relinquish wrong livelihood,  
And be sustained by ethical livelihood.

7

Forsake material possessions,  
Embellish yourself with the wealth of the noble ones.  
Avoid all trifling distractions,  
And reside in the solitude of wilderness.

8

Abandon frivolous words;  
Constantly guard your speech.  
When you see your teachers and preceptors,<sup>34</sup>  
Reverently generate the wish to serve.

9

Toward wise beings with Dharma eyes  
And toward beginners on the path as well,  
Recognize them as your spiritual teachers.  
[In fact] when you see any sentient being,  
View them as your parent, your child, or your grandchild.

10

Renounce negative friendships,  
And rely on a spiritual friend.  
Dispel hostility and unpleasantness,<sup>35</sup>  
And venture forth to where happiness lies.

11

Abandon attachment to all things  
And abide free of desire.  
Attachment fails to bring even the higher realms;  
In fact, it kills the life of true liberation.

12

When you encounter the causes of happiness,  
In these always persevere.  
Whichever task you take up first,  
Address this task primarily.  
In this way, you ensure the success of both tasks,  
Where otherwise you accomplish neither.

13

Since you take no pleasure in negative deeds,  
When a thought of self-importance arises,  
At that instant deflate your pride [4]  
And recall your teacher's instructions.

14

When discouraged thoughts arise,  
Uplift your mind  
And meditate on the emptiness of both.<sup>36</sup>  
When objects of attraction or aversion appear,  
View them as you would illusions and apparitions.

15

When you hear unpleasant words,  
View them as [mere] echoes.  
When injuries afflict your body,  
See them as [the fruits of] past deeds.

16

Dwell utterly in solitude, beyond town limits.  
Like the carcass of a wild animal,  
Hide yourself away [in the forest]  
And live free of attachment.

17

Always remain firm in your commitment.  
When a hint of procrastination and laziness arises,  
At that instant enumerate your flaws  
And recall the essence of [spiritual] conduct.

18

However, if you do encounter others,  
Speak peacefully and truthfully.  
Do not grimace or frown,  
But always maintain a smile.

19

In general when you see others,  
Be free of miserliness and delight in giving;  
Relinquish all thoughts of envy.

20

To help soothe others' minds,  
Forsake all disputation  
And be endowed with forbearance.

21

Be free of flattery and fickleness in friendship,  
Be steadfast and reliable at all times.  
Do not disparage others,  
But always abide with respectful demeanor.

22

When giving advice,  
Maintain compassion and altruism.  
Never defame the teachings.  
Whatever practices you admire,  
With aspiration and the ten spiritual deeds,  
Strive diligently, dividing day and night.<sup>37</sup>

23

Whatever virtues you gather though the three times,  
Dedicate them toward the unexcelled great awakening.  
Disperse your merit to all sentient beings,  
And utter the peerless aspiration prayers  
Of the seven limbs at all times.

24

If you proceed thus, you'll swiftly perfect merit and wisdom  
And eliminate the two defilements.<sup>38</sup>  
Since your human existence will be meaningful,  
You'll attain the unexcelled enlightenment.

25

The wealth of faith, the wealth of morality,  
The wealth of giving, the wealth of learning,  
The wealth of conscience, the wealth of shame,  
And the wealth of insight—these are the seven riches.

26

These precious and excellent jewels  
Are the seven inexhaustible riches.<sup>39</sup>  
Do not speak of these to those not human.  
Among others guard your speech;  
When alone guard your mind.

This concludes the *Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland* composed by the Indian abbot Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna.

