



**6**

**FOUR POWERS TO REMOVE  
NEGATIVE KARMA**

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PRACTICE





# THE ASIAN CLASSICS

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## INSTITUTE

Thank you for your interest in the Asian Classics Institute's Daily Practice Topics. The text and audio may be downloaded (see [www.world-view.org](http://www.world-view.org) in the on-line teachings section), or ordered by mail (see the Courses by mail section of the web site).

This Daily Four Powers Practice consists of six sessions of audio recorded from the original retreat, along with corresponding written materials. The audio can be ordered by mail, listened to on-line as streaming Real Audio, or downloaded onto your computer in MP3 or RA formats for playback later. The written materials for this topic are contained in seven on-line files which can be downloaded, printed and assembled into a three-ring binder.

A complete binder contains the following sections in this order: a binder cover and spine, readings, homework, quizzes, and answer keys. For ease of binder assembly, be sure to print the files on three hole paper.

After listening to the audio from a session the corresponding reading, homework, quiz and meditation should be completed before continuing on to the next session. The homework can be completed using notes, open book style. The quizzes should be completed from memory only, without the aid of notes or other materials. (A good approach is to look at an answer key *after* you have finished that homework, and to use that answer key to study for that quiz.)

Answer keys are supplied so that you may check your homework and quiz answers. All of the quiz questions come from the homework, so the homework answer keys are also used to grade the quizzes.

Daily practice topics are not available for grading by the Asian Classics Institute. Please do not mail in any of the papers to be graded.

We would like to emphasize that, although recordings and written materials can be extremely helpful, it is essential for serious Buddhist practitioners to meet and study directly with a qualified Teacher who can give the necessary guidance and personal instructions of the lineage.

In these teachings the wisdom of Enlightened Beings has been passed down in an unbroken lineage to you. May you take these teachings and put them into practice in your life to benefit all. May every goodness grow and spread in all directions right now!

༄༅། །མཇུག། །

*mandel*

།ས་གཞི་སྔོས་ཀྱིས་བྱུགས་ཤིང་མེ་ཏོག་བཟམ།

*sashi pukyi jukshing metok tram,*

།རི་རབ་སྤིང་བཞི་ཉི་ལྷས་བརྒྱན་པ་འདི།

*rirab lingshi nyinde gyenpa di,*

།སངས་རྒྱས་ཞིང་དུ་དམིགས་ཏེ་དབུལ་བར་བསྐྱེ།

*sangye shingdu mikte ulwar gyi,*

།འབྲོ་ཀུན་རྣམ་དག་ཞིང་ལ་སྦྱོད་པར་ཤོག །།

*drokun namdak shingla chupar shok.*

།ཨི་དྲི་གུ་རུ་རྩ་མཇུག་ལ་ཀི་ནི་རྩ་ཏ་ཡ་མི། །

*Idam guru ratna mandalakam niryatayami.*

## Offering the Mandala

Here is the great Earth,  
Filled with the smell of incense,  
Covered with a blanket of flowers,

The Great Mountain,  
The Four Continents,  
Wearing a jewel  
Of the Sun, and Moon.

In my mind I make them  
The Paradise of a Buddha,  
And offer it all to You.

By this deed  
May every living being  
Experience  
The Pure World.

*Idam guru ratna mandalakam niryatayami.*

༄༅། །སྐབས་འགྲོ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད། །  
*kyabdro semkye*

།སངས་རྒྱས་ཚེས་དང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་རྣམས་ལ།  
*sangye chudang tsokyi choknam la,*

།བྲང་རྒྱལ་བར་དུ་བདག་ནི་སྐབས་སུ་མཆིས།  
*jangchub bardu dakni kyabsu chi,*

།བདག་གིས་སྤྱིན་སོགས་བགྱིས་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱིས།  
*dakki jinsok gyipay sunam kyi,*

།འགྲོ་ལ་ཕན་ཕྱིར་སངས་རྒྱས་འགྲུབ་པར་ཤོག །།  
*drola penchir sangye druppar shok.*

### Refuge and The Wish

I go for refuge  
To the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha  
Until I achieve enlightenment.

By the power  
Of the goodness that I do  
In giving and the rest,

May I reach Buddhahood  
For the sake  
Of every living being.

༄༅། །བཟླ་བ། །

*ngowa*

།དགེ་བ་འདི་ཡིས་སྐྱེ་བོ་ཀུན།

*gewa diyi kyewo kun,*

།བསོད་ནམས་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཚོགས་ཚྲིགས་ཤིང་།

*sunam yeshe tsok-dzok shing,*

།བསོད་ནམས་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལས་བྱུང་བའི།

*sunam yeshe lejung way,*

།དམ་པ་སྐྱུ་གཉིས་འཕྲོ་བ་པར་ཤོག །།

*dampa kunyi topar shok.*

### **Dedication of the Goodness of a Deed**

By the goodness  
Of what I have just done  
May all beings

Complete the collection  
Of merit and wisdom,

And thus gain the two  
Ultimate bodies  
That merit and wisdom make.

ལྷོ། །མཚོད་པ། །  
*chupa*

།སྟོན་པ་སྣ་མེད་སངས་རྒྱལ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།  
*tonpa lame sanggye rinpoche,*

།སྐྱོབ་པ་སྣ་མེད་དམ་ཚཱ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།  
*kyoppa lame damchu rinpoche,*

།འདྲེན་པ་སྣ་མེད་དགའ་འདུན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།  
*drenpa lame gendun rinpoche,*

།སྐྱབས་གནས་དཀོན་མཚོག་གསུམ་ལ་མཚོད་པ་འབྲུལ།  
*kyabne konchok sumla chupa bul.*

**A Buddhist Grace**

I offer this  
To the Teacher  
Higher than any other,  
The precious Buddha.

I offer this  
To the protection  
Higher than any other,  
The precious Dharma.

I offer this  
To the guides  
Higher than any other,  
The precious Sangha.

I offer this  
To the places of refuge,  
To the Three Jewels,  
Rare and supreme.



**The Asian Classics Institute**  
**Practice VI: The Four Powers, How to Get Rid of**  
**Your Old Bad Karma**

**Syllabus**

**Reading One: The Source of the Instruction**

*A presentation on the sources of the instruction on the four powers, including the entire text of the original sutra by Lord Buddha; sections from The Diamond-Cutter Sutra which present the principle of removing old bad karma; and a discussion by Pabongka Rinpoche on why we must remove old bad karma quickly, before it multiplies and overwhelms our life. Included too are some notes on the four powers by Je Tsongkapa's illustrious student, Gyalsab Je, found in his commentary to Master Shantideva's famed Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life.*

**Reading Two: The Power of the Foundation and the Power of Destruction**

*An extraordinary, never-before translated presentation of the first two powers from The Steps of the Teaching (the Tenrim Chenmo), perhaps the greatest text ever written by the early Tibetan Buddhists known as the Kadampas. Included as well here are very beautiful comments on these powers by the Indian master Abhaya Karagupta; Je Tsongkapa; and Pabongka Rinpoche; as well as the entire text of an important general purification text.*

**Reading Three: The Power of the Antidote**

*Actual, practical methods for removing old bad karma: the guts of the four powers. These are presented by the First Panchen Lama and Pabongka Rinpoche, with an extra bit from Geshe Michael.*

**Reading Four: The Power of Stopping**

*Notes on how to stop yourself from repeating the same mistakes in the future, by Geshe Drolungpa (the author of The Stages of the Teaching); Je Tsongkapa; and Pabongka Rinpoche.*

**Practice VI: The Four Powers  
Course Syllabus**

**Reading Five: How the Four Powers Work, and Some Dessert from the  
Tantras**

*Exquisite presentations on why the four powers really do work, with some tantalizing explanations of why the four powers are needed in the secret teachings as well. These are written by:*

*The Indian master Bhavya (490-570), a prominent figure in the original development of the Middle-Way School*

*Master Chim Jampay Yang (c. 1280), a major Sakya thinker known for his commentary on The Treasure House of Knowledge (Abhidharmakosha)*

*Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye (1493-1568), an important textbook writer from the illustrious Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery*

*The First Panchen Lama, Lobsang Chukyi Gyeltsen (1565-1662)*

*The First Changkya Rinpoche (1642-1714), a teacher of the Emperor of China and a previous life of Pabongka Rinpoche*

*Chone Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748), another important textbook writer from Sera Mey;*

*Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851), a precious link in the Vajra Yogini lineage*

*Pabongka Rinpoche (1878-1941)*



## The Asian Classics Institute Practice VI: The Four Powers, How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

### Reading One: The Source of the Instruction

The goals of all Buddhist practice can be reduced to two simple points: removing our old bad karma and collecting new good karma. We begin here a teaching on the sacred practice of the Four Powers, a powerful method for getting rid of old bad karma. This practice is especially important because karmic imprints can last so long in our mind streams: we carry around not only the imprints of negative acts, words, and thoughts that we can recall from this very life (whether from before the time we became Buddhists, before we knew any better, or afterwards, when we simply couldn't control ourselves), but also literally millions of past karmas from past lives, that we have long since forgotten. And until we remove these imprints we can never stop our suffering.

### The Original Sutra on the Four Powers

Our first reading is meant to demonstrate that the teaching on removing our old bad karma was taught by Lord Buddha himself, and so is an authentic instruction that we can believe in and try ourselves. What follows next is the entire text of the work which is the original source of the Four Powers; it comes from the Kangyur, or collection of Lord Buddha's teachings translated into Tibetan from the original Sanskrit. Note that what is later called the "power of stopping" is here referred to as the "power of restoring."

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॥མྱུ་གཤམ་སྐད་དུ། ལྷ་ཅུ་ཅ་ཅུ་རྣམ་མེད་ཤེས་ལྷན་ལྷན་སྐྱུ་ཤ།

In Sanskrit, the name of this book is *Arya Chatur Dharma Nirdesha Nama Mahayana Sutra*.

Practice VI: The Four Powers  
Reading One

བོད་སྐད་དུ། འཕགས་པ་ཚོས་བཞི་བསྟན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

In Tibetan, its name is *Pakpa Chushi Tenpa Shejawa Tekpa Chenpoy Do*.

[In English, its name is *An Exalted Sutra of the Greater Way* entitled "*The Teaching on the Four Practices*."] ]

སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།

I bow down to each and every Enlightened Being, and every bodhisattva.

འདི་སྐད་བདག་གིས་ཐོས་པ་དུས་གཅིག་ན། བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས་སུམ་ཅུ་ཙུ་གསུམ་  
ལྷའི་ནང་ན་ལྷའི་འདུན་ས་ཚོས་བཟང་ན་དགོ་སྟོང་ལྷ་བརྒྱ་ཐམ་པའི་དགོ་སྟོང་གི་དགོ་  
འདུན་ཆེན་པོ་དང་། བྱམས་པ་དང་། འཇམ་དཔལ་ལ་སོགས་པ་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་  
དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་རབ་ཏུ་མང་པོ་དང་ཐབས་ཅིག་ཏུ་བཞུགས་ཏེ། དེ་ནས་  
བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས་ཀྱིས་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་བྱམས་པ་ལ་  
བཀའ་སླུལ་པ།

One time I heard the Buddha give this teaching.

The Conqueror was staying among the worldly gods of the Land of the Thirty-Three, at the great gathering place of the gods known as Excellence. Together with him was a great gathering of 500 monks, along with mass of great bodhisattvas such as Loving One and Gentle Voice.

And the Conqueror spoke the following words to that great bodhisattva, Loving One:

བྱམས་པ། བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་ཚོས་བཞི་དང་ལྷན་ན། ལྷིག་  
པ་བྱས་ཤིང་བསགས་པ་བྱིས་ལོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།།

"O Loving One, if a great bodhisattva keeps four practices, then he or she can never be overwhelmed by bad deeds that they have both committed and collected.

Practice VI: The Four Powers  
Reading One

བཞི་གང་ཞེ་ན། འདི་ལྟ་སྟེ། རྣམ་པར་སུན་འབྱེན་པ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྐྱོད་པ་དང་། གཉེན་པོ་  
ཀུན་ཏུ་སྐྱོད་པ་དང་། སོར་ཚུད་པར་བྱེད་པའི་སྣོབས་དང་། ཉེན་གྱི་སྣོབས་སོ།།

"And what are these four practices? They are the activity of destruction, and the activity of an antidote, and the power of restoring, and the power of the foundation.

དེ་ལ་རྣམ་པར་སུན་འབྱེན་པ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྐྱོད་པ་ནི། མི་དགེ་བའི་ལས་སྤྱད་ན་དེ་ལ་འགྲོད་  
པ་མང་པོ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

"Here the 'activity of destruction' refers to having many regrets about a negative deed that you have committed.

དེ་ལ་གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྐྱོད་པ་ནི། མི་དགེ་བའི་ལས་བྱས་ནས་ཀྱང་དགེ་བའི་ལས་  
ལ་ཤིན་ཏུ་བརྩོན་པའོ།།

"The 'activity of an antidote' refers to making great efforts in positive deeds, despite the fact that one has performed a negative action.

དེ་ལ་སོར་ཚུད་པར་བྱེད་པའི་སྣོབས་ནི། སྡོམ་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་སྐྱབས་པས་མི་བྱེད་  
བའི་སྡོམ་པ་ཐོབ་པའོ།།

"The 'power of restoring' refers to making a commitment to restrain oneself, and then succeeding in not breaking this commitment.

དེ་ལ་ཉེན་གྱི་སྣོབས་ནི། སངས་རྒྱས་དང་། ཚེས་དང་། དགེ་འདུན་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་  
འགོ་བ་དང་། བྱང་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་མི་གཏོང་བ་སྟེ། དེ་སྣོབས་དང་ལྡན་པ་ལ་བརྟེན་  
པས་སྤྲིག་པས་ཟིལ་གྱིས་གཞོན་བར་མི་རུས་སོ།།

"The 'power of the foundation' means never giving up the act of taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Community; and never giving up the wish for enlightenment. Any person who maintains these kinds of power can never be overwhelmed by a negative deed that they may have done.

Practice VI: The Four Powers  
Reading One

བྱམས་པ། བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་ཚོས་བཞི་པོ་དེ་དག་དང་ལྡན་  
ན། སྡིག་པ་བྱས་ཤིང་བསམགས་པ་ཟེལ་གྱིས་ཚོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།།

"O Loving One, any great bodhisattva who keeps these four practices can, rather, overwhelm any negative deed that they may have committed and collected.

བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོས་མདོ་འདི་རྟོག་ཏུ་བཟླག་པར་བྱའོ། །ལ་  
ཏོན་དུ་བྱའོ། །བསམམས་པར་བྱའོ། །བསྐྱོམ་པར་བྱའོ། །མང་དུ་བྱའོ། །དེས་ན་ཉེས་  
པར་སྦྱད་པ་འབྲས་བུ་འབྱིན་མི་རུས་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།།

"You great bodhisattvas should always read this sutra. Recite it out loud as well. Think upon its meaning. Meditate upon it. And then repeat these over and over. If you do, then whatever harmful thing you might have done in the past will never be able to bear its fruit."

བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་གྱིས་དེ་སྐད་ཅེས་བཀའ་སྩལ་ནས་བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་  
དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་བྱམས་པ་དང་། དག་སྟོང་དེ་དག་དང་། བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་དེ་དག་  
དང་། བརྒྱ་བྱིན་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ལྷའི་བྱ་རྣམས་དང་། ཐམས་ཅད་དང་ལྡན་པའི་འཁོར་  
དེ་དག་ཡི་རང་སྟེ་བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་གྱིས་གསུངས་པ་ལ་མངོན་པར་བསྟོད་དོ།།

Thus did the Conqueror speak; and then the great bodhisattva Loving One, and all the monks, and all the bodhisattvas, and all the divine youths—Hundred Gifts and the like, and all the rest of the assembly present took joy in what the Conqueror had spoken, and sang the praises of his words.

འཕགས་པ་ཚོས་བཞི་བསྟན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ་ཚྲོགས་སོ།།

This then concludes *An Exalted Sutra of the Greater Way* entitled "The Teaching on the Four Practices."

### A Note on the Meaning of the Expression "Committed and Collected"

The following selection is taken from *The Entry Point for Children of the Victorious Buddhas*, a commentary by Gyaltzab Je Darma Rinchen (1364-1432) on *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* by Master Shantideva (c. 700 AD). Master Shantideva's text is incidentally a rich resource for instruction on the four powers; the relevant sections can be found in Course Ten of the Asian Classics Institute teachers' program, in readings four and five.

དེ་ཡང་སྤྱད་བ་ཕྱིར་བཅོས་ནི་སྣོམ་པ་གོང་འོག་སོ་སོ་ནས་གསུངས་པ་སྤྱད་བ་ལ་སྤྱིག་པ་  
ཕྱིར་བཅོས་པ་ནི་སྣོབས་བཞིའི་སྣོ་ནས་བྱ་སྟེ། ཚོས་བཞི་བསྟན་པའི་མདོ་ལས། བྱམས་པ་  
བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་ཚོས་བཞི་དང་ལྷན་ན་སྤྱིག་པ་བྱས་ཤིང་  
བསགས་པ་ཡང་ཟླུ་གྱིས་གཞོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། །བཞི་གང་ཞེ་ན། འདི་ལྟ་སྟེ། རྣམ་པར་  
སྤྱད་འབྱེད་པ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྤྱོད་པ་དང་། གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྤྱོད་པ་དང་། ཉེས་པ་ལས་བརྒྱུག་པའི་  
སྣོབས་དང་། ཉེན་གྱི་སྣོབས་སོ་ཞེས་གསུངས་ཏེ་བྱས་ཤིང་བསགས་པའི་ལས་ནི་སྤྱོད་ངེས་  
ཡིན་པས་དེ་ཟླུ་གྱིས་གཞོན་ལུས་ན་མ་ངེས་པ་སྟེ་ཅི་སྟོན།

Instances in which you have committed some transgression of your vows, at whichever level of vows you may have, should be repaired according to the methods prescribed for those particular vows. For repairing the damage caused by other kinds of bad deeds you should utilize the four powers. As the *Sutra on the Four Practices* states,

O Loving One, if a great bodhisattva keeps four practices, then he or she can never be overwhelmed by bad deeds that they have both committed and collected. And what are these four practices? They are the activity of destruction, and the activity of an antidote, and the power of restoring, and the power of the foundation.

The expression "committed and collected" refers to actions whose karmic results are "certain to be experienced." If even these types of karmic results can be overcome by the four practices, then there is no need to mention those which are not certain to be experienced.

## An Original Source for the Principle that Old Karma Can be Removed

The general principle that old karma *can* be removed from our mind streams is clearly stated in a number of important works by Lord Buddha himself. One of the most famous of these is a part from the famous *Diamond-Cutter Sutra*, which appears in the following selection in bold lettering. The commentary that follows the sutra is the only known native Tibetan explanation of the work, and was composed by Chone Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748) of the incomparable Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery.

Chone Lama skillfully weaves the root text into his explanation, and these words have also been printed in bold. He moreover quotes several other important original sources to demonstrate that old karma can be removed.

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༄༄ །རབ་འབྱོར། རིགས་ཀྱི་བྱུང་མ་རིགས་ཀྱི་བྱུ་མོ་གང་དག་འདི་ལྟ་བུའི་མདོ་སྡེའི་  
ཚིག་འདི་དག་ལེན་པ་དང་། འཛིན་པ་དང་། གྲོག་པ་དང་། ཀུན་རྒྱུ་པར་བྱེད་པ་དེ་དག་  
ནི། མནར་བར་འགྱུར། ཤིན་ཏུ་མནར་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

O Subhuti, any son or daughter of noble family who takes up a sutra like this, or who holds it, or reads it, or comprehends it fully, will suffer. They will suffer intensely.

།སྒྲ་མ་ལས་གཞན་ཡང་རབ་འབྱོར་རིགས་ཀྱི་བྱུང་མ་བྱུ་མོ་གང་མདོ་སྡེའི་འདི་འཛིན་འཆང་  
སོགས་བྱེད་ཅིང་དོན་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་དེ་དག་ནི་ནད་སྣ་ཚོ་གས་དང་འཐབ་  
ཚོད་འཆང་འདྲུ་དང་བཅིང་དེག་སོགས་ཀྱིས་མནར་བ་དང་ཤིན་ཏུ་མནར་བའི་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་  
སྲོང་བར་འགྱུར་བ་ཡོད་སྲིད་ཀྱང་། སྐྱོན་ཆེན་པོ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

Here in a statement over and above the one before, Lord Buddha says,

O Subhuti, consider any son or daughter of noble family who takes up this sutra, who holds it in their hands, and so on—any living being who does these things and then puts the meaning of the sutra into practice. It is entirely possible that such a person

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could experience some pain, that they could **suffer, and suffer intensely**, through various kinds of illness, or conflict with others, or being criticized, or chained, or beaten, or anything of the like. It could happen, but it would be no great problem, because. . .

༄༄ །དེ་ཅི་འདི་སྤྱིར་ཞེ་ན། རབ་འགྱུར། སེམས་ཅན་དེ་དག་གིས་ཚེ་རབས་སྡུ་མའི་མི་  
དག་གི་ལས་ངན་སོང་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་བ་གང་དག་གུས་པ་དག་ཚེ་འདི་ཉིད་ལ་མནར་  
བས། ཚེ་རབས་སྡུ་མའི་མི་དག་གི་ལས་དེ་དག་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་  
བྱང་རྒྱུ་ཀྱང་འཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་བའི་སྤྱིར་རོ།

Why is it so? Because, o Subhuti, such beings are purifying non-virtuous karma from the entire string of their previous lives, karma that would have taken them to the three lower realms. As they purify this karma, it causes them to suffer here in this life. As such they will succeed in cleaning away the karma of these non-virtuous deeds of their previous lifetimes, and they will as well achieve the enlightenment of a Buddha.

རྒྱུ་མཚན་དེ་ཅི་འདི་སྤྱིར་ཞེ་ན། སེམས་ཅན་དེ་དག་གིས་ནི་ཚེ་རབས་འདི་དང་སྡུ་མའི་དུས་སུ་  
མི་དག་གི་ལས་ཆེན་པོ་ངན་སོང་གསུམ་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་བའི་ལས་གང་དག་གུས་པ་དེ་  
དག་ཐམས་ཅད་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་ནི་ཚེ་འདི་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཐོག་ལ་སྤྱིན་ཏེ་སྤྱུག་བསྡུལ་གྱིས་མནར་བ་  
དེའི་སྣོབས་གྱིས་ཚེ་རབས་སྡུ་མའི་མི་དག་གི་ལས་དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་འབྱུང་བ་སྟེ་དག་  
པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་བྱང་རྒྱུ་ཀྱང་རྒྱུར་དུ་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། །ཤེས་ཕྱིན་ལ་  
བརྩོན་པའི་གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྦྱོང་བའི་སྣོབས་གྱིས་ནི་སྤྱིག་ལས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་རྩ་བ་བདག་འཛིན་  
བཅོམ་སྟེ་ཐར་པ་དང་ཐམས་ཅད་མཐུན་པ་ཡང་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་ཞེས་བཤད་ན། ངན་འགྲོར་  
སྐྱེ་བའི་ལས་རྣམས་འཛོམས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་སྟོས་སོ། །རྩལ་དེ་ལྟར་རྟོག་གི་འབར་བ་སོགས་ནས་  
བཤད་ཅིང་། ཐར་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ལས་ཀྱང་། ངན་འགྲོར་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྤྱིག་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། །མགོ་བོ་ན་

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བ་ཙམ་གྱིས་འབྱུང་། །ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ། །དཔེར་ན་ས་བོན་བཏབ་ཀྱང་ཚུ་ལུང་བྱོད་གཤེར་  
སོགས་གཏན་མེད་ན་སྐྱུ་གུ་མི་སྐྱེ་བ་ལྟར་བདག་འཛིན་སྲོང་རྣམས་ན་ནི། བསགས་པའི་ལས་  
ཅི་ཡོད་ཀྱང་གོ་གས་ཉོན་མོངས་མེད་པས་རྣམ་སྤྲིན་འབྱེན་མི་རྣམས་ཏེ། རྣམ་འགྲེལ་ལས།  
སྲིད་པའི་སྲིད་ལས་རྣམ་བཤམ་བའི། །ལས་གཞན་འཕེན་རྣམས་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ། །ལྟན་ཅིག་བྱེད་  
པ་ཟད་ཕྱིར་རོ། །ཞེས་གསུངས་པ་ལྟར་རོ།

For what reason is it so? Because such beings are purifying great non-virtuous karma that they have committed both in this life and in their lifetimes past—karma so serious that it would normally have taken them to the three lower realms. As such, the results of all these deeds are ripening here in this very life. Thus one is suffering pain, and by force of this suffering he or she is "cleaning away"—that is, purifying—all of this non-virtuous karma. As such, one will quickly achieve the enlightenment of a Buddha.

The force of an antidote action consisting of making great efforts in the perfection of wisdom is destroying the grasping to some self-existence, the very root of all non-virtuous deeds. This is why the text goes on to say that one will achieve freedom and the state of omniscience. And since the text does say this, then needless to say one could destroy the karma that is leading you to a birth in the lower realms. The way in which this works is explained in texts such as the *Blaze of Reasoning* and others. As the *Sutra of the Great Liberation* says as well,

Even though one may have the bad karma  
To take his birth in the three lower realms,  
A simple headache will clean it away.

Suppose for example that a seed is planted, but is then deprived completely of water, or fertilizer, or warmth, or the rest. Then it would never sprout.

Here the case is the same. If you are able to eliminate grasping to some self-nature, then none of the karmas you have collected, regardless of how many there are, can ever ripen forth. This is because their companion, the mental afflictions, are absent. As the *Commentary on Valid Perception* states,

No further karmas can ever project their results  
In one who has gone beyond the desire for existence;  
This is because the conditions have all been finished.



## Why We Do Have to Remove Old Bad Karma, and Quickly

The need for us to remove our old bad karma, and to do so *as quickly as possible*, is eloquently expressed by Pabongka Rinpoche in his famed work on the steps of the path to Buddhahood (*lam-rim*) entitled *A Gift of Liberation Thrust into Our Hands*:

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གསུམ་པ་སྒྲིག་པ་བཤམས་པའི་ཡན་ལག་ནི། རང་ཅག་ནམས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེད་ལ་ཉོགས་པ་  
སྤར་མ་སྐྱེས་པ་གསར་དུ་མི་སྐྱེ་ཞིང་། སྐྱེས་ཟེན་ཉམས་པ་ནི་སྒྲིག་སྒྲིབ་འདིས་བྱེད་པ་  
ཡིན་ལ།

Here next is our explanation of the third of the seven parts [of the practice of accumulating the power of good karma and cleaning ourselves of the power of bad karma].

The fact that people like you and I are constantly unable to reach any new spiritual realizations, and the fact that we are forced to watch whatever realizations we have already reached slip away from us, is all caused by our negative actions and the spiritual blockage they bring.

དེར་མ་ཟད་ཚེ་འདི་ཕྱི་འི་མི་ལོགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྒྲིག་པས་བྱས་པ་ཡིན། དེ་དག་མི་  
འདོད་ན་སྒྲིག་པ་བཤམས་དགོས། བཤམས་པ་བྱས་ན་ནི་མཚམས་མེད་ཀྱི་ལས་དང་།  
སྐྱོང་ངེས་ཀྱི་སྒྲིག་ཆེན་པོ་འང་འདག་བྱུག།

And that's not all. Every bad thing that ever happens to us—whether it comes to us in this life or in any of our future lives—comes from our past negative deeds. If you want all this to stop, then you have to admit and purify yourself of these deeds. If you do do some purification, then you can clean yourself even of the karma that comes from one of the "immediate," most evil deeds; and also remove even great bad karmas that, under normal conditions, are absolutely certain to lead to a painful experience in the future.

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Reading One

བྱེ་སྐྱའི་ལུགས་ལ་མི་འདག་པར་གསུངས་ཀྱང་། དེ་ལྟར་འདག་བྱབ་པ་འདི་ཐལ་  
འགྱུར་བའི་བཞེད་པ་ཡིན།

Now the Detailist School [the lowest of the four classical schools of Buddhism] states that it is impossible to remove bad karma; the Consequence School [the highest school] though holds the position that it can be done.

བཤེས་སྒྲིངས་ལས་ཀྱང་། གང་ཞིག་སྡོན་ཆད་བག་མེད་གྱུར་པ་ལ། རྩིས་ནས་བག་  
དང་ལྡན་པར་གྱུར་དེ་ཡང་། །ཟླ་བ་སྒྲིན་བལ་ལྟ་བུར་རྣམ་མཛེས་ཏེ། །དགའ་བོ་སོར་  
ཐྱིང་མཐོང་ལྡན་བདེ་བྱེད་བཞིན། །ཞེས་གསུངས།

The *Letter to a Friend* [by the realized being Nagarjuna], for example, states that:

A person who has failed to behave carefully in the past  
But who later turns into a person who conducts themselves with care  
Is something beautiful, like a moon that breaks out of the clouds.  
Such were Joy, and String of Fingers; Pure Sight, and Happiness.

མཁས་པའི་སྒྲིག་པ་ལྷི་ཡང་ཡང་། །སྐྱོན་པོའི་སྒྲིག་པ་ཡང་ཡང་ལྷི། །ཞེས་པའང་  
བཤགས་པ་བྱ་ཚུལ་མཁས་མི་མཁས་ལ་བྱེད།

Remember too the saying that goes,

Even if wise men commit a wrong deed  
That's heavy, it turns out light.  
Even if fools commit a wrong deed  
That's light, it turns out heavy.

The whole point here is whether a person is wise in knowing how to do purification.

བྱམ་ཟེ་བདེ་བྱེད་གྱིས་རང་གི་མ་བསད་པ་དང་། སོར་ཐྱིང་ཅན་གྱིས་མི་ཆིག་སྡོང་དགུ་  
བརྒྱ་གོ་དགུ་བསད་པ་དང་། མ་སྐྱེས་དགུས་པ་བསད་པའི་མཚམས་མེད་གྱི་ལས་བྱས་

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ནས་ཕྱིས་བདེན་པ་མཐོང་བའང་བཤགས་པ་ལྷགས་དྲག་གྲུས་པ་ལས་བྱུང་།

The Brahmin named Happiness killed his own mother. String of Fingers killed no less than 999 other people, and Ajata Shatru committed the "immediate" or most evil deed of murdering his own father. They later saw the truth though, and this was because they succeeded in very powerful purification.

[Translator's note: The text here for the number of people murdered says "1,999"; this is probably a printing error for "999 out of a thousand he was told to kill by an evil teacher."]

དེས་ན་བཤགས་པ་སྟོབས་ཆེན་གྱིས་སྡིག་པ་རྩ་བ་ནས་འདག །འབྲིང་གིས་ཡང་དུ་  
འགོ། ཐ་མས་འཕེལ་ཁ་འཆད་པ་ཡིན།

A very powerful practice of purification removes the effects of a bad deed from its very roots. A medium practice makes the karma lighter. A minimum practice of purification keeps the power of the karma from increasing.

བཤགས་པ་མ་གྲས་ན་ཉིན་བཞིན་སྡིག་པ་ལྲབ་འགྱུར་དུ་འགོ་བས་སྡིག་པ་རྒྱང་དུ་འང་  
ཆེན་པོར་འགྱུར་བ། དཔེར་ན་ལྷིག་གཅིག་བསད་པའི་སྡིག་པ་ཡང་མ་བཤགས་ན་ཉིན་  
བཅོ་ལྔ་ལ་སྡིག་གཅོད་ཆེག་སྲི་དུག་སྟོང་སུམ་བརྒྱ་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་གྲ་བཞིར་འགྱུར་འགོ་བས།  
མི་བསད་པའི་སྡིག་ཅུ་དུ་གྱུར་པ་ཡིན།

Suppose you fail to do any purification at all. The way the power of a bad deed increases within you is that it doubles every 24 hours; and this means that even a minor negative action turns into a major one. Suppose for example that you fail to purify yourself of the bad karma of killing a single flea. In the course of 15 days then this has become the equivalent of the karma of killing fleas some 16,384 times—or just about the amount of karma you collect from killing a human.

རང་ཅག་སྡིག་པ་བཤགས་འདོད་མེད་ཅིང་། སྡིག་ལ་འཛིགས་པ་མི་སྐྱེ་བ་ལས་འབྲས་  
ལ་ཡིད་ཆེས་མ་སྐྱེས་པས་ལན། དེ་སྐྱེས་ན་སྡིག་པ་སྤ་མོ་ལའང་འཛོམ་པ། དཔེར་ན།

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ངོ་བོས་ཐེབས་ལམ་དུ་ཉེས་བྱས་ཕྱུ་ཞིག་བྱང་བར་ཡང་འགྲུལ་པའི་སྣ་བསྐྱིལ་ནས་  
བཤགས་པ་ལྷགས་དྲག་མཇོད་འདུག་པ་དེ་ལྟར་འོང་བ་ཡིན།

People like you and I don't feel like doing much purification of our past bad deeds; nor do we feel any great fear over what we did in the past. This is the fault of our failing to have any belief in the laws of karma and its consequences. If we were able to reach any kind of understanding of these laws then we would be careful to avoid even the very slightest harmful action. This in fact is why Lord Atisha would stop in his tracks in the middle of a trip somewhere and undertake some serious purification the minute he had committed even a very minor bad deed.

རང་རེ་ཕལ་ཆེ་བས་སྲིག་བཤགས་བྱ་རྒྱུ་ཡོད་བསམ་པ་ཆེར་མེད་མོད། དེ་ནི་སྲིག་པ་  
བྱས་ཚུལ་ལ་མ་བསམས་བས་ལན་ཏེ། ཞིབ་དུ་བསམ་ན་ད་ནངས་ནམ་ལངས་ནས་  
བརྗེད་ཡིད་དང་ངག་སོགས་ཀྱིས་གཞོན་སེམས་དང་། ངག་འབྲུལ་ཆོག་རྩལ་སོགས་  
ཇི་ཙམ་བྱས་འདུག།

It may be true that the majority of us here feel that we have never even committed any bad deed much worthy of doing any purification about; but we feel this way only because we've avoided really considering how many bad deeds we really do commit. Think about it carefully though—think just about today, about the time that's passed from the time the sun came up this morning on up to the present moment. Do you have any idea of how many bad deeds we have done, in our thoughts and words and the rest? How many times we have thought something bad of someone else? How much useless talk we've done, and all the rest as well?

**The Asian Classics Institute**  
**Practice VI: The Four Powers, How to Get Rid of**  
**Your Old Bad Karma**

**Reading Two: The Power of the Foundation and the Power of**  
**Destruction**

**An Overview from *The Steps of the Teaching***

One of the most exciting sources for the instruction on the four powers is found in *The Steps of the Teaching*, an important work by one of the greatest of the Kadampas, or early Buddhists of Tibet. This text was rare even in the time of Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419), and we have a painted record of him discovering it, devouring it in a few days, and immediately teaching it to his disciples in a fit of inspiration. He later used it as a basis for perhaps the greatest book ever written in the Tibetan language—*The Great Book on the Steps of the Path (Lamrim Chenmo)*—and even modeled the name of his masterpiece after the earlier work, which itself was written by Geshe Drolungpa, Lodru Jungne (c. 1100).

The structure of Geshe Drolungpa's text is that of a root text and accompanying commentary, and it is possible that this root text was composed by his teacher, the famed translator Ngok Londen Sherab (1059-1109).

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ཕ །ཡང་སྒྲིག་པ་ཆེན་པོ་སྤྱོད་བའི་ལས་ཀྱི་ཁྱད་པར་སྤྱིར་བསྟན་པ།

Here next we will present the details of the rite for cleaning away the power of great bad deeds that you have done in the past.

འཇམ་པར་སྐྱུན་འབྲེན་གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྤྱོད།

འཇིགས་པ་ལས་ལྷོག་ཏེན་གྱི་སྟོབས་རྣམས་ནི།

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མཚམས་མེད་ལ་སོགས་སླིག་པའི་ཚོགས་ཆེན་ཡང་།  
འབྲེལ་གྱིས་གཞོན་ཅིང་སྦྱང་བར་རྒྱལ་བས་གསུངས།

The Victors have stated that these four practices  
Can overwhelm even the greatest mass  
Of bad karma done in the past:  
Even an act like an "immediate" evil deed.  
These are the powers of destruction,  
Of antidote activity, stopping, and foundation.

**Why the Power of the Foundation Comes First**

In the original sutra on the four powers, and even up to the time of Je Tsongkapa and other Tibetan masters, the power of the foundation comes last in the order of the four. The oral lineage though states that the foundation comes first, and we see a reference in Je Tsongkapa himself to justify this. The following selection is found in his *Ritual for the Purification of Bad Deeds*—

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ཚོས་བཞི་བསྟན་པའི་མདོ་ལས། །སྟོབས་བཞི་དང་ལྷན་ན་བྱས་ཤིང་བསགས་པའི་  
སླིག་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་འདག་པར་གསུངས་པས་ལས་ཀྱི་སློབ་པ་སྦྱང་བར་འདོད་པས་ནི་  
གཞོན་པོ་སྟོབས་བཞི་ལ་འབད་པར་བྱའོ།།

*The Sutra on the Four Practices* states that, if a person keeps the four practices, then they can purify themselves of every bad deed which they may have committed and collected. Thus we can say that, if you hope to clean yourself of the spiritual obstacles created by your past bad deeds, you should make great efforts in the four antidote powers.

དེ་ལ་རྟེན་གྱི་སྟོབས་མཐར་གསུངས་ཀྱང་ཉམས་སུ་སྦྱང་བའི་རིམ་པ་ལ་སྟོན་དུ་སྦྱངས་  
ན་བདེ་ལ། དེ་དག་བྱ་བའི་རིམ་པ་ནི་འདི་འོ།

Now although the power of the foundation is spoken last in the sutra, it works out better if you do it first in order when you are actually carrying out the practice. Therefore this is the way that I've done it here in my text for the ritual of purifying yourself of bad deeds.

## Why It's Called the Power of the "Foundation"

The reasoning behind a number of the names for the various powers is not immediately evident. Here are two brief selections from Pabongka Rinpoche to explain why the power of the foundation is so named. The first selection is from his *Notes to a Teaching on the "Thousand Angels of the Heaven of Bliss," according to the System of Se Lama.*

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བཤགས་པ་སྟོབས་ཆེན་ཡོང་བ་ལ་གཉེན་པོ་སྟོབས་བཞི་ཚང་དགོས། དེ་ལ་རྟེན་གྱི་  
སྟོབས་ནི་སྐྱབས་སེམས་བྱེད་པ་ལ་བྱ་སྟེ། གང་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་སྟོབས་པ་ལས་ལྔ་པའི་  
རྟེན་ཞིག་ལ་འཇོག་ཅིང་། སྟོབས་པ་པལ་ཆེར་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་སེམས་ཅན་གཉིས་ལ་  
བརྟེན་ནས་བྱུང་བས་སངས་རྒྱས་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་སྟོབས་པ་སྐྱབས་འགྲོའི་སྟོན་སྐྱུང་།  
སེམས་ཅན་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་སྟོབས་པ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་ཀྱི་སྟོན་སྐྱུང་དགོས་པས་རང་  
ལུགས་ལ་རྟེན་གྱི་སྟོབས་སྐྱབས་སེམས་བྱེད་པ་ཉིད་ཡིན།

In order for a practice of purification to have any great power, all four of the four antidote powers must be present. The "power of the foundation" refers to a practice of taking refuge and feeling the Wish for enlightenment. The point is that you need some solid ground or foundation that you can use to pick yourself back up from after you've committed a bad deed. And the vast majority of our bad deeds are "founded" on or committed relative to one of two groups: the Buddhas or other unenlightened living beings.

Wrong deeds that we do relative to Buddhas must be cleaned away through the practice of taking refuge. Those that we do relative to other unenlightened beings must be cleaned through the Wish for enlightenment. This then is why, according to our own system, the power of the foundation consists of just these two practices: taking refuge and feeling the Wish for enlightenment.

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A similar sentiment is expressed in the second selection, from Pabongka Rinpoche's *"The Machine-Powered Wagon of the Supreme Way," being Instructions on How to Do the Six Preliminary Practices of the Steps on the Path to Enlightenment:*

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བཞི་པ་རྟེན་གྱི་སྟོབས་ནི། བཤགས་ཡུལ་དང་བཤགས་པ་བའི་རྟེན་ལ་གསུངས་པའང་  
ཡོད་མོད་ཀྱང་། གཙོ་བོ་ནི་སྐབས་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པ་སྟེ། རྟེན་ཞེས་པ་ནི། འགྲུལ་བ་  
ས་གཞི་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ལྔ་དགོས་པ་ལྟར། གང་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་སྲིག་པ་ལས་ལྔ་དགོས་  
རྟེན་ཏེ། འདི་གཉིས་ལ་མ་བརྟེན་ན་སྲིག་པ་རྒྱུ་དུ་ལས་ཀྱང་ལྔ་དགའ་ཞིང་། འདི་  
ལ་བརྟེན་ན་སྲིག་པ་སྟོབས་ཆེན་ཡང་སྟོང་སྟེ། ཚོས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་སྲིག་པས་མི་བརྗིད་པའི་  
གནད་ཀྱི་གཙོ་བོ་ཡིན་ཅོག་གསུངས། དེ་ཡང་སྲིག་པ་རྣམས་ཡུལ་དགོན་མཚོག་དང་  
སེམས་ཅན་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བྱུང་བའི་གནད་ཀྱིས་ཡིན།

Here is the fourth section, which treats the power of the foundation. Admittedly this term has been used to refer to a "foundation" in the sense of both the one towards whom you make your confession, or the one who does the confessing. What the name is primarily referring to though is the practice of taking refuge and feeling the Wish for enlightenment.

The word "foundation" in this sense then is a reference to some solid ground that you use to push yourself back up after you have collapsed—the foundation you lean on to get yourself back up after you've committed a bad deed. If you fail to follow these two practices then you will find it difficult to get back up even from a very minor bad deed. If on the other hand you do follow them, then you can clean yourself even of very powerful negative actions.

Remember the saying that goes, "It's the natural and principal crucial point that keeps you from being crushed by the wrong you've done." The point being made here is that the very reason these two practices work is that our bad deeds are committed relative either to the Three Jewels or to other unenlightened living beings.

[Note that the saying referred to here appears in *The Steps of the Teaching* selection in the very next section of this reading; it has some different spellings, but the point is the same.]



## A General Description of the Power of the Foundation

After naming the four powers in the selection given at the beginning of this reading, the famed Kadampa work entitled *The Steps of the Teachings* goes on to give the details of each of the four. Here is the presentation on the power of the foundation:

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ཕྱི་ལོ་གྱི་སྒོ་བས་ནི། །བཞི་པ་སྐྱབས་འགོ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་བརྟན་པ་ཡི། །ཉེན་ལས་  
བརྗེ་བ་མེད་པའི་གནས་ཐོབ་ཡིན། །ཉེན་གཉིས་ལ་བརྟན་པ་ནི་ཚོས་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་སྲིག་  
པས་མི་བརྗེ་བའི་གནས་ལ་གནས་པའི་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

Here is our explanation of the power of the foundation.

For the fourth, you've reached a place where you can't  
Be crushed if you're founded upon firm thoughts  
Of taking refuge and the Wish for enlightenment.  
The reason for this is that anyone who's founded on these  
two foundations  
Will be naturally able to stay in a place where their bad  
deeds can never crush them.

ཕག་གི་ཉེན་པ་བརྗེ་བ་ལས། །གང་དག་སངས་རྒྱས་སྐྱབས་དོང་པ། །དེ་དག་ངན་  
འགོར་འགོ་མི་འགྱུར། །མི་ཡི་ལུས་ནི་སྤངས་ནས་སྟུ། །དེ་དག་ལྷ་ཡི་ལུས་འཐོབ་བོ།  
།ཚོས་དང་དག་འདུན་ལའང་དེ་ཁོ་ན་ལྷར་བརྟོན་ཏོ།།

*The Account of the Pig* includes the lines:

Anyone who takes refuge in the Buddha  
Can never go to the lower realms;  
After they leave behind this body  
They will win the body of a god.

You can replace the word "Buddha" with "Dharma" or "Community," and recite the verse in the very same way.

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སྒོང་པོ་བཀོད་པ་ལས། བྱང་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་ནི་ཉེས་པར་བྱས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་བསྲིག་  
བས་བསྐྱལ་པའི་མེ་ལྷ་བུའོ། །མི་དགོ་བའི་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཟད་པར་བྱེད་པས་སའི་  
འོག་ལྷ་བུའོ།།

The sutra known as *Stalks in Array* also says—

The Wish for enlightenment is like the fire at the end of the world;  
it burns away every bad deed.

It is like the depths of the earth;  
it swallows every harmful act.

ཡང་དཔེར་ན་དུལ་ཚུའི་རིགས་གསེར་དུ་སྒྲུང་བ་སྤང་བ་གཅིག་གིས་ལྷགས་སྤང་སྒོང་  
གསེར་དུ་བསྐྱུར་རོ། །དུལ་ཚུ་སྤང་བ་གཅིག་པོ་དེ་ནི་ལྷགས་དེ་ཙམ་གྱིས་ཀྱང་ལྷགས་  
སུ་བྱ་བའམ་ཟད་པར་མི་རུས་སོ།།

Think of the quicksilver that turns things gold; a single gram can  
transform a thousand grams of iron into gold. But if you take all  
those grams of iron and try to change the one gram of quicksilver  
into iron, they can't do it in the least.

།དེ་བཞིན་དུ་བྱང་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་ཀྱི་དུལ་ཚུའི་ཁམས་དགོ་བའི་རྩ་བ་བསྐྱོ་བ་དང་ཡི་  
ཤེས་གྱིས་བཟུང་བ་གཅིག་གིས་ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་པའི་ལྷགས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཟད་པར་  
བྱས་ཏེ་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཐམས་ཅད་མཐུན་པའི་ཁ་དོག་དུ་བྱེད་ཀྱང་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པ་  
གཅིག་པོ་དེ་ནི་དེ་དག་གིས་ཉོན་མོངས་ཅན་དུ་བྱ་བའམ་ཟད་པར་མི་རུས་སོ།།

The Wish for enlightenment is the same: a single touch of this  
quicksilver collection of goodness, mixed with some dedication  
and wisdom, can finish off every bit of the iron of the mental  
afflictions; it turns every existing thing the color of the  
knowledge of every existing thing. But this one little Wish can  
never be turned by all these mental afflictions into the slightest  
afflicted thought.

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དཔེར་ན་མར་མེ་གཅིག་ཁང་པ་ཅི་ལྟ་བུར་བཅུག་ཀྱང་རུང་། དེ་མ་ཐག་ཏུ་ལོ་སྟོང་  
བསགས་པའི་མུན་པ་སེལ་ཅིང་སྒྲུང་བར་བྱེད་དོ། །བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་ཀྱི་མར་མེ་  
གཅིག་གིས་ཀྱང་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་བསམ་པའི་འབྲིབས་པོ་མ་རིག་པའི་མུན་ནག་དང་ལྷན་  
པར་ལྷགས་མ་ཐག་ཏུ་བསྐྱེལ་བ་བརྗོད་དུ་མེད་པར་བསགས་པའི་ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་  
པའི་མུན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་སེལ་ཞིང་ཡི་ཤེས་ཀྱི་སྒྲུང་བ་བསྐྱེད་དོ།

Think of a single butter lamp; you can carry it into any house at all and it will clear away the dark and light up the place, the minute you step in, even if the dark has been accumulating there for the last thousand years. Now think of the Wish for enlightenment; just a single lamp of the Wish. Suppose you stick it for a moment into the mind of a living being smothered in the darkness of ignorance. In the very next moment, all the darkness of karma and the mental afflictions that has been collecting there for eons beyond the capacity of words to express is cleared away; and the light of wisdom is born.

།དཔེར་ན་ཡིད་བཞིན་གྱི་རྩོད་བྱ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཅོད་པའུ་ཐོགས་པའི་སྤྱིའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་  
ལ་གཞན་གྱི་གཞོད་པའི་འཇིགས་པ་མེད་དོ། །བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་དང་སྟོང་ཇི་ཆེན་པོ་  
རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་ཅོད་པའུ་ཐོགས་པ་ལ་ཡང་ངན་སོང་དང་ངན་འགྲོས་གཞོད་པའི་འཇིགས་  
པ་མེད་དོ་ཞེས་སོ།

Think of the king of the naga serpents, sporting a crown embellished with the king of all precious gems: the wish-giving jewel. It is impossible for him ever to fear any harm from others. A person who wears a crown embellished with the jewels of the Wish for enlightenment and great compassion is the same; they need never fear that they could come to the harm of the lower realms, of going to these realms.

།ཉི་བར་འཁོར་གྱི་ལྷས་པ་ལས་ཀྱང་། བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་བྱང་ཆུབ་

སེམས་དཔའ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ལྷུང་བ་ནི་ཉིན་མཚན་གྱི་སྐྱུ་ཆ་སྐྱུ་ཆའི་ནང་དུ་གཉེན་པོས་  
ཟེན་ན་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་དང་མི་འབྲལ་བར་གསུངས་སོ།

*The Sutra Requested by Upali, finally, states,*

This is the power of the Wish for enlightenment: if a bodhisattva has broken his vows, but maintains this antidote for the mistake even for a third of one third of a single day and night, then he or she will never lose their Wish.

### **Detail on the Power of the Foundation, especially on the Wish for Enlightenment**

Next we present some detail on the power of the foundation; this comes from *The Jewel of the True Thought of the Able One*, by the Indian master Abhaya Karagupta—the text was written around 500 AD, which again shows that the teaching on the powers was current long before the move of Buddhism to Tibet. This particular selection is extraordinary especially in explaining how the Wish for enlightenment mentioned among the parts of the power of the foundation refers to the *ultimate* Wish for enlightenment: the direct perception of emptiness.

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ཉིན་གྱི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་སྲིབ་པ་ལས་ཀྱི་འཇིགས་པ་ལས་བཞིན་དུ་བྱེད་པ་པོ་མི་འདོད་  
པའི་འབྲས་བུ་འབྱེན་པས་ཟིལ་གྱིས་གཞོན་མི་རུས་སོ། ཉིན་གྱི་སྟོབས་ནི་རི་ཞིག་  
དགོན་མཚོག་གསུམ་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་འགོ་བ་འབའ་ཞིག་ཉིད་དེ།

The frightening karma that comes from any particular bad deed normally gives a result to the person who committed it which is something that they would never wish to happen. The power of the foundation has the effect though of preventing this result from appearing and overwhelming the person. In a very preliminary sense, we can say that the power of the foundation refers exclusively to taking refuge in the Three Jewels.

ཇི་སྐད་དུ་ཕག་མའི་རྟོགས་པ་བརྗོད་པར་སྐྱུ་ཕུ་ཕྱ་གསུམ་པའི་ལྷའི་བུ་འཆི་བའི་ཚས་

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ཅན་དོང་གི་ཕག་མེའི་མངལ་དུ་སྐྱེས་ནས་སྲོང་བར་འགྱུར་བའི་ལས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་  
འབྱིན་པ་ལ་མངོན་དུ་སྐྱོབས་པ་མཐོང་ནས་འཇིགས་སྐྱག་པ་ནས་ཇི་སྲིད་བརྒྱུན་གྱི་  
ངག་ལས་དགོན་མཚོག་གསུམ་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་སོང་བས་ལས་དེ་རྩད་ནས་ཕྱུང་སྟེ་དེ་  
ནས་ཤི་འཕོས་པ་དགའ་ལྡན་དུ་སྐྱེས་སོ་ཞེས་པའི་བར་དུ་འོ།།

The efficacy of this power is demonstrated in a number of references. There is first of all *The Account of the Pig*, which includes the following section.

There was a divine youth living in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three who was about to die. He perceived that he was about to experience the ripening of one of those karmas that produces its result in the very next life: he was about to take birth in the womb of a pig.

The youth was overcome by terror, but was able to take refuge in the Three Jewels by following the instructions of the Lord of the Gods, Shakra. Because of this the power of the karma was ripped from its very roots; he died and moved on not to a life as a pig, but instead to the Heaven of Bliss.

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་མི་གཏོང་པ་ཡང་ཉེན་གྱི་སློབས་སོ། །བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་རྣམ་པ་  
གཉིས་ཏེ་སློན་པ་དང་འཇུག་པའི་སེམས་ཀྱི་དབྱེ་བ་ལས་སོ། །འཇུག་པའི་སེམས་ཀྱང་  
ཀུན་རྫོབ་པ་དང་དོན་དམ་པའི་བྱེ་བྲག་ལས་རྣམ་པ་གཉིས་སོ་ཞེས་འཆད་པར་འགྱུར་  
འོ།།

It is also the power of the foundation if one never gives up the Wish for enlightenment. Remember that there are two forms of this Wish: the Wish in the form of a prayer, and the Wish in the form of action. The Wish in the form of action is itself divided into two further types: the "deceptive" form and the "ultimate" form. Here I will undertake to explain this reference.

དེ་ལ་སློན་པའི་སེམས་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིབ་པ་རྩད་ནས་འབྱིན་པའི་དཔེར་བརྗོད་

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པ་ནི། མཇེའ་བོའི་བྱ་གྲིང་གཞན་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་འདོད་པ་མས་བརྩེ་བས་རྐང་པ་དག་ལ་  
འཇུས་ནས་བརྗོད་པ་ནམ་ལ་སྤོ་བ་དྲག་པོས་མགོ་བོ་ལ་རྐང་པ་བརྒྱབ་ནས་གཟིངས་ལ་  
ཞེན་པ་ནས་ཇི་སྲིད་གཟིངས་ཞིག་ནས་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་འགྲོམ་ན་ཉི་ཚེ་བའི་དམུལ་བ་ཡོད་  
པར། འདིས་མ་ལ་མ་གུས་པ་བྱས་པའི་ལས་ཟད་པས་སྡོད་ཅིག་འཁོར་ལོ་འདི་ཁྱོད་  
ཀྱི་སྤྱི་བོར་བསྐྱོར་བར་འགྱུར་རོ་ཞེས་པའི་སྒྲ་བར་སྒྲུང་ལས་ཐོས་ནས། གང་སྐྱུའང་  
རུང་བ་འགྲོ་བ་འདི་ན་མ་ལ་མི་གུས་པར་བྱས་པ་རྣམས་དང་བྱེད་པ་རྣམས་དང་བྱེད་  
པར་འགྱུར་པ་དེ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ལས་དེ་བདག་ཁོ་ན་ལ་རྣམ་པར་སྤྲིན་པར་གྱུར་ཅིག སུ་  
ཡང་རྣམ་པ་འདི་ལྟ་བུའི་སྤྱག་བསྐྱེད་ཀྱི་སྐལ་བ་ཅན་དུ་མ་གྱུར་ཅིག་ཅེས་ལྷགས་དྲག་  
པོས་སྒྲོན་པ་ལ་གནས་པ།

A person who relies on the Wish in the form of a prayer can rip out, from its roots, the obstacle created by the deed they've committed. There are a number of references we could use to demonstrate this fact.

The young man named "Child of the Friend" wanted to travel across the sea to another land; his mother, for sheer love of the boy, would kneel and grasp him by his two legs, and was thus able to stop him. There came a point though where he was seized by violent anger at her, and he hit her on the head with his leg. Then he went to sea, but his ship went down in a storm.

There was a near-hell at the edge of the ocean, and here the karma seed from disrespecting his mother was awakened. He heard a voice from the sky that said "Kneel here, for the crown of knives is about to spin down upon your head." And he stood, making to himself a fervent prayer:

May the karma of all those who have ever disrespected their mother in the past; or who are disrespecting their mother at this moment; or who may ever in the future disrespect their mother all ripen upon me alone, at this very moment. May no one else ever suffer the pain that I am about to undergo.

འདི་འདྲ་བའི་ལས་མཐོང་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་ཉམས་སུ་སྤྱོད་བར་འགྱུར་བ་དེ་ཡང་ཡོངས་སུ་  
ཟད་དེ་འཁོར་ལོ་ཡང་དེའི་སྤིང་དུ་དེ་ལྟ་ཉིད་དུ་གནས་ཤིང་སྐར་འདི་སྐད་ཀྱང་ཐོས་ཏེ་  
ཡོངས་ལ་སོང་ཤིག་ཤོད་ཀྱི་ལས་འདི་ནི་སྒྲོན་པའི་སྒྲོབས་ཁོ་ན་ལས་མ་ལུས་པར་ཟད་  
དོ་ཞེས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་རྟོ།།

The karmic seed of having this very thought was awakened, ripening into one of those karmic results known as "the kind you see in this same life." At that very moment, the crown rose into the air, and he heard another voice from the sky—only this time it said: "Stand now and go, for the power of your prayer—and nothing else—has finished off the karma of that past deed completely."

འཇུག་པའི་སེམས་བརྟན་བཏགས་པ་ནི་ལྟག་པར་མོས་པ་སྟེ། གང་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་  
བྱང་ལྷན་སེམས་དཔའི་ཡོན་ཏན་རྣམས་ལ་དང་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་གདོད་ནས་དག་པ་  
ཉིད་ཚོས་རྣམས་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་བདག་མིད་པ་ཉིད་དུ་ལྟག་པར་མོས་ནས་བྱང་ལྷན་  
དང་སེམས་ཅན་ལ་དམིགས་ཏེ་སེམས་སྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད་དོ།།

One must also feel a strong attraction for what we only call the "Wish in action." This is a state of mind that belongs to certain people who have great admiration for the high spiritual qualities of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. They have a strong attraction for what has been pure from time with no beginning; for the very fact that no existing object has any "self," meaning any nature of their own. They keep this fact in mind and then feel the Wish, focussing upon all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

དེ་ལྟར་སེམས་འདི་ནི་དངོས་པོར་འཇིན་པའི་གཉེན་པོ་ཡིན་ལ་དེའི་རྩ་བ་ཅན་གྱིས་  
ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་གཉེན་པོར་འགྱུར་ཏེ་ཡང་དག་པའི་དོན་ཇི་ལྟ་བ་བཞིན་རྟོགས་པའི་  
སྤྱིར་རོ།།

This way of thinking is an antidote for holding things to be self-existent, and the Wish with this at its core is thus an antidote for each and every negative thing. This is because a person with this form of the Wish has realized pure reality, just as it really is.

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དེའི་ཕྱིར་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པ་འདི་ནི་ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིབ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་རྣམ་པར་སྐྱོད་བར་བྱེད་དེ།  
རི་རྒྱན་དུ་གསུངས་པ། བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་དེ་གལ་ཏེ་སྔ་དོ་སྤྱད་བ་བྱུང་ན་ཉི་མ་  
ཕྱེད་ན་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་མངོན་དུ་བྱེད་པ་དེའི་ཚུལ་གྱི་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་མཐའ་མེད་པ་  
ཉིད་དུ་རིག་པར་བྱའོ། །དེ་བཞིན་དུ་རིགས་ཀྱི་བྱ་བསྐྱེད་པའི་མེད་ང་མཉམ་པའི་བྱང་  
ཆུབ་ཀྱིས་སེམས་ནི་ཉེས་པར་སྐྱོད་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྟེག་པར་བྱེད་དོ་ཞེས་རྒྱ་ཆེར་རོ། །

And so we can say that anyone who is able to develop this particular version of the wish is able to clean from themselves, completely, each and every obstacle caused by their past bad deeds. This is the point of the scripture that states:

Suppose any particular bodhisattva commits a transgression of their vows in the morning, but by noon has had a true feeling of the Wish for enlightenment. You should understand that they have created nothing but immeasurable mountains of pure conduct by spending their day this way.

Again and again too we see statements then like "This Wish for enlightenment, o child of noble family, is equal in its strength to the fire that ends the world; it annihilates each and every bad deed you've ever done."

དེ་བཞིན་དུ་འཕགས་པ་བྱམས་པའི་རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པར་རིགས་ཀྱི་བྱ་བའི་ལྷ་སྟེ་སྐྱོན་མི་  
གཅིག་གིས་མམ་གནས་ཁང་ཅི་འདྲ་བ་ཅིག་ཏུ་རབ་ཏུ་བཅུག་ན། དེ་རབ་ཏུ་བཅུག་མ་  
ཐག་ཏུ་ལོ་སྟོང་དུ་བསགས་པའི་ལྷན་པ་ལྷན་ནག་གྲང་སེལ་ཞིང་སྤང་བར་བྱེད་དོ། །དེ་  
བཞིན་དུ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཐུན་པར་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པའི་སྐྱོན་མི་གཅིག་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་  
བསམ་པའི་ཐེབས་པོ་མ་རིག་པའི་ལྷན་པ་དང་ལྷན་པ་ཅི་འདྲ་ཅིག་ཏུ་རབ་ཏུ་ལྷགས་ན་དེ་  
རབ་ཏུ་ལྷགས་མ་ཐག་ཏུ་བརྗོད་དུ་མེད་པའི་བསྐྱེད་པ་བརྒྱ་སྟོང་ཕྱག་ཏུ་བསགས་པའི་  
ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་པའི་སྐྱིབ་པའི་ལྷན་པ་ལྷན་ནག་གྲང་སེལ་ཞིང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་སྤང་བ་



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ཡང་དག་པར་བསྐྱེད་དོ། །ཞེས་སོ།།

In this same vein, *The Biography of Loving One* says:

It's like this, o child of noble family. Think of a single butter lamp; you can carry it into any cottage or house at all and it will clear away the dark and light up the place, the minute you step in, even if the dark has been accumulating there for the last thousand years. Now think of the Wish to reach total omniscience, just a single lamp of the Wish. Suppose you stick it for a moment into the mind of any particular living being smothered in the darkness of ignorance. In the very next moment, all the darkness of the spiritual obstacles created by karma and the mental afflictions—darkness that has been collecting there for so many millions of eons that words could not express their number—is cleared away; and the light of wisdom is born in its fullness.

འཕགས་པ་དཀོན་མཆོག་བརྟེན་པར་ཡང་། འོད་སྤངས་འདི་ལྟ་སྟེ་སྤྱད་ལ་སོགས་  
པར་ལོ་བརྒྱ་སྟོང་སྤྱད་འདས་པ་དང་སྐྱེས་བུ་འགའ་ཞིག་གིས་ཉིལ་མར་སྐྱོན་མི་བྱས་ན་  
དེ་ཅི་ལྟར་པ་ལྟར་ནག་དེ་ནི་ལོ་བརྒྱ་སྟོང་དུ་བསགས་པ་སྟེ་འདི་ནས་མི་འགོ་ཞེས་པར་  
འགྱུར་རམ། བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས་མ་ལགས་ཉེ་གང་གི་ཕྱིར་ཉིལ་མར་སྐྱོན་མི་བགྱིས་ན་  
དེ་ལ་མི་འགོ་བའི་རྣམ་པ་མ་མཆིས་ཉེ་དེས་གདོན་མི་འཚལ་བ་ཉིད་དུ་འགོ་བར་  
བགྱིའོ།།

*The Exalted Sutra on the Pile of Jewels* too contains a similar statement:

This, o Protector of Light, is how it is. Suppose there's a certain cave or similar place that hasn't been visited for a hundred thousand years. Then suppose that certain people come in carrying a small lamp of sesame oil. No matter how dark it is, and even though the darkness has been collecting there for a hundred thousand years, it will—without the slightest doubt at all—do nothing but go away; and it doesn't matter if you stand

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there and ask it not to go, or even if Lord Buddha comes and asks it not to go, for not even a Buddha has the power to prevent the darkness from leaving the place once the lamp of sesame oil has been carried in.

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས་ཀྱིས་བཀའ་སྤྲུལ་པ། འོད་སྤྲུངས་དེ་བཞིན་ཁོ་ནར་ལས་དང་ཉོན་  
མོངས་པ་བརྒྱ་སྟོང་ཕྱུག་དུ་མར་བསགས་པ་ཡང་རྩུལ་བཞིན་ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པའི་སོ་སོར་  
རྟོགས་པ་གཅིག་གིས་འགྲོའོ། །ཞེས་སོ། །བྱང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སེམས་ལ་ལྷགས་ན་ནི་ཁ་ན་  
མ་ཐོ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་འདག་པ་ལ་ཐེ་ཚོམ་མེད་དོ། །

And then again did the Conqueror speak:

Listen, o Protector of Life. Suppose that the karma of past misdeeds, and mental afflictions as well, have been collecting in a person's mind for many hundreds of thousands of years. They act exactly the same as the darkness, for a single instance of proper thinking—a single instance of the realization that includes the understanding of each of the individual truths—forces them all to leave.

Thus we can say that you need never question the fact that a person who enters into the state of the Wish for enlightenment cleans from themselves each and every negative deed.

ཇི་སྐད་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་གསང་བའི་མདོར་གསུངས་པ་འོད་སྤྲུངས་དེ་གལ་ཉི་  
སེམས་ཅན་གཅིག་ཁ་ན་མ་ཐོ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་མི་དགོ་བ་བཅུ་པོ་འདི་རྣམས་ཡང་དག་པར་  
ལྷན་པར་གྱུར་ལ་དེ་ཡང་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་ཚོས་བསྟན་པ་རྒྱ་དང་རྒྱུན་ལྷན་པ་ལ་  
ལྷགས་ཉི་འདིར་བདག་གམ་སེམས་ཅན་ནམ་སྟོན་གམ་གང་བྱེད་པ་པོའམ་གང་ཚོར་  
བ་པོ་ཅི་ཡང་མེད་དོ་ཞེས་མ་བྱས་མངོན་པར་འདུ་མ་བྱས་པ་སྐྱེ་མའི་ཚོས་ཉིད་ལ་

འཇུག་ནས་སེམས་ཅན་དེ་ངན་འགྲོར་འགྲོ་བར་ང་མི་སྣེའོ་ཞེས་པའི་བར་དང་།

Think too of *The Sutra on the Secrets of the Ones Gone Thus*, where it says:

Suppose, o Protector of Light, that any particular person has committed one of those most horrible harmful actions, extreme forms of the ten bad deeds. And then suppose that they enter the Dharma teachings of the Ones Gone Thus, the instruction on causes and conditions. They begin thinking to themselves that there is no self at all; and no living being at all; no being at all; no one at all who does anything; no one at all who feels anything. In short, they learn the meaning of the very nature of things, the illusion, the fact that nothing is ever made, and that nothing is ever made to happen. I do not say, o Protector of Light, that such a person would ever go to the lower realms.

ཇི་སྲིད་དུ་གང་འདི་ལྟར་ལྷག་པར་མོས་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེ་ལ་ནི་ལྷུང་བ་དང་ལྷུང་བའི་  
གནས་ཅི་ཡང་མེད་དོ། །དེ་ཅིའི་སྣང་དུ་ཞེ་ན། གནས་མེད་ཅིང་གོ་སྐབས་མེད་པ་སྟེ་  
གང་སྐྱིབ་པ་མེད་པ་ལ་ལྷུང་བ་གནས་པ་འདི་ནི་གནས་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཅོ་ཞེས་པའི་བར་  
དུ་འོ།།

For as long as any person has a strong attraction of this kind [an attraction to the concept of emptiness] they cannot commit a transgression of their vows; there is absolutely no chance for them to do so. And why is that? Because there is simply no chance, there is no situation in which it could happen; and this is true because the possibility of a person without obstacles committing a transgression of their vows is, flatly, *not* a possibility.

### The Power of Destruction—What it Means to Regret Something

We move now to the second of the four powers: the power of destruction. The following selection, by Pabongka Rinpoche, gives a good idea of what it would feel like to have the kind of regret needed for the this power. The description is found in his *Notes to a Teaching on the "Thousand Angels of the Heaven of Bliss," according to the System of Se Lama.*

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རྣམ་པར་སྐྱུན་འབྲུན་པའི་སྣོད་མཉམས་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ། དཔེར་ན། མི་བཞི་ལ་  
དུག་དང་འདྲེས་པའི་ཟས་མཉམ་དུ་བྲོས་ནས། གཅིག་གི། གཅིག་གི་ལ་ཁད་དུ་གྱུར།  
གཅིག་ན་ནས་ཡོད་ན། ཅིག་ཤོས་མ་ན་པ་དེ་ལ་འགྲོད་པ་གཏན་མི་བཟོད་པ་འོང་བ་  
སྟེ།

The "power of destruction" refers to an emotion of regret. Imagine for example that four people have been sitting around a table eating the same dish mixed with some deadly poison. Now one of them has already fallen over and died. Another is taking his last breath. The third is writhing in agony. The fourth hasn't started feeling the effects yet. Think though of the unbearable regret that he has already begun to feel about eating that particular dish.

“སྤར་སྡིག་པ་བྱས་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་གྲངས་མེད་པ་ཞིག་ནས་འགའ་ཞིག་ད་ལྟར་སྐྱུལ་  
བ་སོགས་སུ་སྐྱེས་ཏེ་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱུལ་སྟོང་བཞིན་པ་དང་། འགའ་ཞིག་སྐྱེ་ཚོག་ཚོག་ཏུ་  
ཡོད་པ་ལ།

Countless beings living in the universe right now have done bad deeds in the past. A certain number of them have already taken their birth in the hells or similar realms, and are tortured there even as we speak. Certain others are on the very verge of taking these same births.

བདག་གྱུང་སྤར་བསམས་པའི་སྡིག་པ་ལ་བཤགས་པ་གནད་སྤོན་ཞིག་མ་བྱུང་ན་དེ་  
འདྲའི་ངན་སོང་དུ་སྐྱེ་ངེས་སུ་ཐག་ཚོད་པར་བསམས་ནས་སྤར་སྡིག་པ་བྱས་པ་ལ་  
འགྲོད་གདུང་ཤུགས་དྲག་ཏུ་སྐྱེད་པ་ཡིན།

You now must think about it, and come to a specific decision in your mind: "If I fail to do a perfectly effective purification of the negative karma that I've already collected up to now, then it's an absolute certainty that I will have to take my next birth in those same realms." Then you'll be able to feel a very fierce kind of regret about all the wrong things you've done already.

## Some Detail on the Power of Destruction

We return next to Geshe Drolungpa's *Steps of the Teaching* for a little detail on the power of destruction:

༺ །སོ་སོར་བཤད་པ་བཞི་ལས་སུན་འབྱེན་པའི་སྟོབས་ནི། །དང་པོ་འགྲོད་པས་  
བདག་ལ་རབ་སྐྱད་ནས། །དུག་པོས་སྐྱུག་ལྟར་བཤགས་པས་སྐྱུང་བ་སྟེ། །ཉི་བར་  
འཁོར་གྱིས་ཉུས་དང་བསྐྱོ་བའི་རྒྱལ། །གསེར་འོད་དམ་པའི་ཚོ་གས་བཤགས་པའོ།།

Here we begin our treatment of each of the four powers individually. The first is the power of destruction:

For the first feel a sense of strong regret  
And scold yourself; then clean the bad deed  
With purification, like a poisoned man  
Who vomits. To purify use the rituals  
In *Upali's Sutra*, or *Dedication's King*,  
Or else in the *Holy Golden Light*.

འདི་ནི་འགྲོད་པས་ཉེས་དམིགས་སུ་བལྟ་བ་མང་དུ་གོམས་པར་བྱ་ཞིང་མཐོལ་བ་དང་  
བཤགས་པ་སྟེང་ཐག་པ་ནས་བྱ་བས་སྐྱོར་བ་སྟེ། མདོ་གསུམ་ལས་གསུངས་པའི་ཚོ་  
གས་བཤགས་པ་”

The point of the regret here is to learn to recognize that what you did is something wrong; and for this you will have to feel the regret again and again. Then open up your heart, admit the wrong openly, and decide to go about the task of purifying yourself of the karma. With this attitude in mind, undertake a ritual of purification from one of the three sutras mentioned.

## A Traditional Ritual of Purification

Rituals of purification to be recited as one contemplates the power of destruction can be found in each of the three sutras mentioned in the preceding verse. In Tibetan monasteries, these have been condensed into an exquisite piece known as *The General Confession*. The word "general" here refers

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especially to all the bad deeds we have ever done in the past, over the duration of beginningless time, and which we may not now remember.

In addition to the version of *The General Confession* found immediately following, which has Tibetan and English interspersed, a single sheet with the full English one on side and the full Tibetan on the other has been supplied with this course notebook at the end of the readings, for frequent use!

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༄༅། །སྤྱི་བཤགས།

The General Confession

ཞུ་དུ་ལགས།

In sadness I say this.

སྣ་མ་རྗེ་ཇི་འཇིན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་སོགས་པ་སྤྱོད་གས་བཅུ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་  
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་། དགོ་འདུན་བཅུ་ན་པ་རྣམས་བདག་ལ་  
དགོངས་སུ་གསོལ།

I call on my Lama, the Keeper of the Diamond, and all the rest: the enlightened Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and all the community of pure beings in every corner of the universe. Please hear me.

།བདག་མིང་འདི་ཞེས་བགྱི་བས་ཚེ་རབས་འཁོར་བ་ཐོག་མ་མ་མཆིས་པ་ནས་ད་ལྟ་ལ་  
ཐུག་གི་བར་དུ། ཉོན་མོངས་པ་འདོད་ཆགས་དང་ཞེ་སྤང་དང་གཏི་མུག་གི་དབང་གིས་  
ལུས་ངག་ཡིད་གསུམ་གྱི་སྒོ་ནས་སྤྱི་ག་པ་མི་དགོ་བ་བཅུ་བགྱིས་པ་དང་།

In this circle of suffering, in an infinite string of lifetimes, from time with no beginning up to the present moment, I, \_\_\_[name]\_\_\_, have come under the power of bad thoughts—the thoughts of wanting, disliking, and ignorance. And so in my body, my speech, and my mind I have done harmful things. I have done the ten non-virtues.

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མཚམས་མ་མཚིས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་བགྱིས་པ་དང་། དེ་དང་ཉེ་བ་ལྟ་བུ་བགྱིས་པ་དང་། མོ་མོར་  
ཐར་པའི་སྒྲོམ་པ་དང་འགལ་བ་དང་། བྱང་རྒྱུ་སེམས་དཔའི་བསྐྱབ་པ་དང་འགལ་བ་  
དང་། གསང་སྒྲགས་ཀྱི་དམ་ཚིག་དང་འགལ་བ་དང་།

I have done the five great wrongs, and I have done the five which are close to them. I have broken my vows of freedom. I have broken my bodhisattva precepts. I have broken my secret commitments.

པ་དང་མ་ལ་མ་གུས་པ་དང་། མཁན་པོ་དང་སློབ་དཔོན་ལ་མ་གུས་པ་དང་། རྒྱུགས་  
ཚངས་པ་མཚུངས་པར་སྤྱོད་པ་རྣམས་ལ་མ་གུས་པ་དང་།

I have disrespected my father and mother. I have disrespected the Abbot and the Master who gave me my vows. I have disrespected my fellow disciples.

དགོན་མཚོག་གསུམ་ལ་གཞོན་པའི་ལས་བགྱིས་པ་དང་། དམ་པའི་ཚོས་སྤངས་པ་  
དང་། འཕགས་པའི་དགོ་འདུན་ལ་སྐྱར་པ་བཏབ་པ་དང་། སེམས་ཅན་ལ་གཞོན་པའི་  
ལས་བགྱིས་པ་ལ་སོགས་པ།

I have done things to hurt the Three Jewels. I have rejected the holy Dharma. I have belittled the Community of higher beings. I have acted against all living kind.

སྤྲིག་པ་མི་དགོ་བའི་ཚོགས་བདག་གིས་བགྱིས་པ་དང་། བགྱིད་དུ་སྐྱེལ་བ་དང་།  
གཞན་གྱིས་བགྱིས་པ་ལ་ཇེས་སྤྱི་ཡི་རང་བ་ལ་སོགས་པ།

These and other harmful deeds, a great mountain of mistakes, I have done. I have encouraged others to do them, I have been glad when others did them, and more.

མདོར་ན་མཐོ་རིས་དང་ཐར་པའི་གོགས་སྤྱི་གྱུར་ཅིང་འཁོར་བ་དང་ངན་སོང་གི་རྒྱུར་  
གྱུར་པའི་ཉེས་ལྷུང་གི་ཚོགས་ཅི་མཚིས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱ་མ་དོ་ཇེ་འཛིན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་

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སོགས་པ་སྟོགས་བཅུ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཐམས་  
ཅད་དང་། དག་འདུན་བཅུ་ན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེན་སྲུང་མཐོལ་ལོ། །མི་འཆབ་བོ།  
།འཆགས་སོ། །སྤྱི་ཆད་སློམ་པར་བགྱིད་ལགས་སོ། །

In short, I speak of the entire mass of bad deeds, and the breaking of my vows and commitments, that ever I may have done: all those things which will prevent me from reaching the higher births and freedom itself; all those things which will continue to cause me pain in the circle of suffering.

Here, in the direct presence of my Lama, the Keeper of the Diamond, and all the rest: before the enlightened Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and all the community of pure beings in every corner of the universe, I openly admit the things I have done. I hide nothing from you, I reveal all to you. And I swear that, from this moment on, I will keep myself from all such deeds.

།མཐོལ་ཞིང་བཤགས་ན་བདག་བདེ་བ་ལ་རིག་པར་གནས་པར་འགྱུར་གྱི། མ་མཐོལ་  
མ་བཤགས་ན་ནི་མི་འགྱུར་རོ། །

By admitting all, and revealing all, I shall be at peace; but not admitting, and not revealing, I cannot be at peace.



**The Asian Classics Institute**  
**Practice VI: The Four Powers, How to Get Rid of**  
**Your Old Bad Karma**

**Reading Three: The Power of the Antidote**

This brings us to the third of the four powers: the power of the antidote. We hear first from His Holiness the First Panchen Lama.

**The Most Important Power of All**

Which is the most important of the four powers? We turn for our answer to the First Panchen Lama's *"Song for Opening Pure Hearts,"* consisting of Responses to Questions Posed with Motivations of Purest White:

མྱེ་བུ་ལ་བཤགས་པར་བྱེད་པ་ལ། །སློབས་བཞི་གཙོ་བོ་དེའི་ནང་ནས། །གཉེན་པོ་  
ཀུན་ཏུ་སློབ་པ་མཚོན།

Which is the very most important  
Of the four powers that we use  
To purify ourselves of the karma  
Of wrongs we have done before?  
The very highest is an activity  
That acts as an antidote.

**The Most Powerful Form of the Power**

And which form of this most powerful of the four powers is itself most powerful? We get a hint from Pabongka Rinpoche, in the following selection from his *"Machine-Powered Wagon of the Supreme Way,"* being Instructions on How to Do the Six Preliminary Practices of the Steps on the Path to Enlightenment:

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གཙོ་ཆེ་བ་བསྐྱབ་བཏུས་ནས་གསུངས་པ་ནི་དུག་སྟེ། ཤེར་སྤྱིན་གྱི་མདོ་གྲོག་པ་ལྟ་བུ་  
མདོ་སྟེ་ལ་བརྟེན་པ་དང་། སྤྱིག་པའི་འཁོར་གསུམ་མི་དམིགས་པར་བསམས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་  
སྟོང་ཉིད་ལ་བརྟེན་པ་དང་།

There are six forms of the power of the antidote that are mentioned in Master Shantideva's *Compendium of the Trainings*. These include relying on the collection of sutras, by reading something like the perfection of wisdom; and relying on the study of emptiness, contemplating on how the three spheres of the bad deed you've done are devoid of any nature of their own . . .

[The "three spheres" refers to the person who did the bad deed (yourself); the person towards whom you did the bad deed; and the bad deed itself.]

**Details on the Power of the Antidote**

For a more detailed explanation of the power of the antidote, we return to *The Steps of the Teaching*, by the Kadampa geshe Drolungpa:

། །གཉིན་པོའི་སྟོབས་ནི། །གཉིས་པ་ཐེག་མཚོག་མདོ་ཟབ་ལ་སྦྱར་དང་། །ཚོས་  
ཀུན་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ལ་འཇུག་པ་དང་། །གསང་སྟུགས་མཐུ་ཆེན་བཟླས་བརྗོད་བྱེད་པ་  
དང་། །བདེ་གཤེགས་སྐྱ་གཟུགས་བྱེད་དང་མཚོད་སོགས་སོ།།

Here secondly is our explanation of the power of the antidote.

For the second you could apply yourself  
To profound sutras of the greater way;  
Learn how all things have emptiness;  
Recite secret words of power;  
Make images of Those Gone to Bliss;  
Make offerings, and other such practices.

མདོ་སྟེ་ཟབ་མོ་ལ་བརྟེན་པ་ནི་དོ་རྗེ་གཙོད་པ་ལས། །གང་དག་འདི་ལྟ་བུའི་མདོ་སྟེ་ལི་

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ཚིག་འདི་དག་ལེན་པ་དང་འཛིན་པ་དང་། ལྷོག་པ་དང་ཀུན་རྒྱལ་པར་བྱེད་པ་དེ་དག་ནི་  
མནར་བར་འགྱུར། ཤིན་ཏུ་མནར་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།།

"Relying on profound works from the collection of sutras" is explained in the following words from *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra*:

Anyone who takes up a sutra like this, or who holds it, or reads it, or comprehends it fully, will suffer. They will suffer intensely.

ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་ཞེ་ན། སེམས་ཅན་དེ་དག་གི་མི་དགོ་བའི་ལས་ངན་སོང་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་བ་  
གང་ཡིན་པ་དེ་དག་ཚེ་འདི་ལ་མནར་བས་བྱང་བར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བྱང་  
རྒྱལ་གྲང་འཕྲོ་བ་པར་འགྱུར་རོ་ཞེ་སོ།།

Why is it so? Because such beings are purifying non-virtuous karma that would have taken them to the lower realms. As they purify this karma, it causes them to suffer here in this life; they will as well achieve the enlightenment of a Buddha.

སྣོང་པ་ཉིད་ལ་མོས་པ་ནི་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་མཛོད་ལས་གང་གིས་ཕའང་ཡིན་ལ།  
རང་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱང་ཡིན་པ་གསོད་པ་དང་། དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་གྱི་དཀོར་བརྟུ་བ་  
དང་། མའང་ཡིན་ལ་དག་བཅོམ་པའང་ཡིན་པ་ལ་ལོག་པར་སྐྱོད་པ་དང་། སངས་  
རྒྱས་ལ་སྐྱེ་བ་འདེབས་པ་དང་། འཕགས་པའི་དགོ་འདུན་ལ་མི་སྟོན་པ་བཟོད་པ་  
དང་། འཕགས་པ་རྣམས་ལ་གཞོད་པའི་ཚིགས་དང་། ཚོས་འདོད་པ་རྣམས་ཡིང་  
བར་བྱེད་པ་དང་། ཡང་དག་པར་སོང་བ་དག་གི་རྙེད་པ་འཕྲོག་པའི་སེམས་དང་།  
མཚམས་མེད་པ་བྱེད་པར་གཤེགས་པ་དང་། ལྷ་བས་ག་ཟིངས་པ་དང་བཅུ་ནི་སློག་  
གཙོད་པ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ནང་ན་མ་རུངས་པ་སྟེ། མི་དགོ་བ་བཅུའི་ལས་ཀྱི་ལམ་འདི་

# དག་ནི་ཁ་ན་མ་ཐོ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་དང་བཅས་པའོ།།

Having a "strong attraction for emptiness" is explained in *The Treasure of the Ones Gone Thus* as follows:

Suppose someone has committed any of these ten bad deeds: killed a person who is both their father and a self-made Buddha; or stolen the possessions of the Three Jewels; or raped someone who is both their mother and an enemy destroyer; or spoken lowly of the Buddha; or said unpleasant things of the community of realized beings; or said harmful things to realized beings; or misled those who seek the Dharma; or who hope to steal the possessions of those who have gone to purity; or who have prepared to commit one of the "immediate," most evil actions; or who are fighting over differences in their worldviews. These are the very worst of all the bad deeds of killing and the rest, and such people then possess the karma of committing the most harmful versions of the ten non-virtuous paths of action.

གཤམ་ཏེ་སེམས་ཅན་གཅིག་ཅིག་འདི་རྣམས་ཀུན་དང་ལྷན་པར་གྱུར་ལ། དེའང་དེ་  
བཞིན་གཤེགས་པས་རྒྱ་དང་རྒྱུན་དུ་ལྷན་པའི་ཚོས་བསྟན་པ་ལ་འཇུག་སྟེ། འདི་ལ་  
བདག་གམ་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམ། ལྷོག་གམ་གང་ཟག་གམ། གང་བྱེད་པའམ། གང་  
སྲོང་བ་ནི་འགའ་ཡང་མེད་དོ་སྣམ་ནས་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་བྱས་པ་མེད་པ་དང་མངོན་  
པར་འདུ་བྱ་བ་མེད་པ་དང་སྐྱུ་མ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་། ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ་མེད་པ་དང་རང་  
བཞིན་གྱིས་འོད་གསལ་བའི་ཚོས་ཉིད་ལ་འཇུག་ཅིང་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་གཟོད་མ་ནས་  
དག་པར་ཡིད་ཆེས་ཏེ་མོས་ན། སེམས་ཅན་དེ་ངན་སོང་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་ང་མི་སྒྲུའོ།།

Suppose that any one person were to collect the karma of committing every one of these ten. Even a person like this could enter the Dharma teachings of the Ones Gone Thus, the instructions that They have given on causes and conditions. And a person like this would begin thinking to themselves that there is no self at all; and no living being at all; no being at all; no one at all who does anything; no one at all who feels anything. In short, they learn about the quality of all existing things where

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nothing has been made; and nothing has been brought about; and which is like an illusion; and which is free of everything to do with the mental afflictions; and which is, by its very nature, the very nature of clear light. These people then come to believe and to feel a strong attraction for the fact that every existing object is and has been, for time with no beginning, totally pure. And I do not say that such a person will ever go to the lower realms.

ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིབ་པ་རྣམ་པར་དག་པ་ལས་ཀྱང་། བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ལྷུང་བ་ལ་ལྷུང་  
བ་མ་ཡིན་པར་མཐོང་བ་དང་། འདུལ་བ་མ་ཡིན་པ་ལ་འདུལ་བར་མཐོང་བ་དང་།  
ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ་ལ་རྣམ་པར་བྱང་བར་མཐོང་བ་དང་། འཁོར་བའི་ཁམས་ལ་  
སྤྱང་ན་ལས་འདས་པའི་དབྱིངས་སུ་མཐོང་བ་དེས་ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིབ་པ་རྣམ་པར་དག་པ་  
འཕྲོབ་བོ་ཞེས་གསུང་སོ།།

The sutra called *Purifying Yourself of the Spiritual Obstacles Created by Your Past Deeds* also says:

Think of those bodhisattvas who see that a transgression of the vows is no transgression of the vows; who see that a failure to control yourself is to control yourself; who see that to be filled with mental affliction is to be totally pure; who see that the realm of the circle of suffering is the ultimate sphere of nirvana. It is these who succeed in purifying themselves of the spiritual obstacles created by their past deeds.

[The point here of course is the recognition by these high beings that the ultimate nature even of opposites is the same, pure emptiness; not that—as some Tibetan schools have very wrongly taught—suffering and nirvana are somehow the same thing.]

མི་ལམ་བསྟན་པ་ལས་ཀྱང་། མ་སྐྱེས་དབྱ་ཡིས་པ་ནི་བསད་གྱུར་ཅིང་། །དེ་བཞིན་  
གཤེགས་པ་བཀོངས་པའི་སྦྱོར་བྱས་ཀྱང་། །དེ་སེམས་གཅིག་གིས་ངན་འགོ་རྣམ་  
གྲོལ་ན། །གང་ཟག་དམ་པ་གང་ཡིན་སྟོས་ཅི་དགོས།

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The sutra called *The Section on the Dream* too includes the following:

Ajata Shatru killed his own father,  
And made preparations to murder  
A being who had Gone That Way;  
If even he was freed from the lower realms  
By a single state of mind,  
What need mention a being who's holy?

།སེམས་ཀྱིས་འཆིང་བར་བྱེད་ཅིང་གྲོལ་བྱེད་པས། །ལུས་སེམས་འདི་ལ་ངེས་པ་ཅི་  
ཡང་མེད། །ལུས་ཀྱི་འདུ་འཇི་མཐོང་ནས་གཤེམ་བྱེད། །ཕ་རོལ་དག་ལ་མ་སྐྱ་ལུས་  
སྦྱོངས་ཤིག་ཅེས་སོ།།

Because they are chained to each other  
And freed from each other by the mind,  
This body and mind are completely uncertain.  
See the turmoil that this body is  
And damn it; on the other side be sure  
You've cleaned yourself of this great wound.

གསང་སྐབས་བཞུགས་པ་བྱ་བ་ནི་དམ་ཚིག་གསུམ་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ལས་མིག་བཅུ་མས་ལ་  
སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའ་ལ་དམིགས་པའི་སེམས་ཀྱིས་ཡི་གེ་བརྒྱ་པ་  
ལན་སྟོང་ཕྱག་བརྒྱད་བཞུགས་བརྗོད་བྱས་ན། མིག་བཅུ་མས་བཞིན་དུ་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་  
བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའ་མཐོང་བར་འགྱུར། སྤིག་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་བྲལ་བར་འགྱུར་  
སོ།།

Here is what "reciting secret words of power" refers to. The secret book known as *The King of the Three Pledges* says,

Suppose you close your eyes, and then picture the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. And suppose that, in this state of mind, you repeat the hundred-syllable mantra 8,000 times. You will then come to see the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, even with your eyes still closed. And you will as well be freed from every bad deed that you've done in the past.

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ཡང་ན་མཚོད་རྟེན་ལ་སྐོར་བ་བྱེད་ཅིང་སྣོང་ཕྱག་བརྒྱད་བཟླས་པ་བྱེད། །སྐྱུ་གཟུགས་  
དང་དམ་པའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེགས་བམ་གང་ཡང་རུང་བ་ཞིག་མདུན་དུ་བྱས་ནས་ཀྱང་ཚོགས་  
ནི་འདི་ཉིད་དོ་ཞེས་སོ།།

You could also circle an offering shrine, and repeat the same 8,000. Or you could seat yourself before an image of an enlightened being, or before volumes of the holy Dharma, and perform this very same ritual.

སྐྱུ་ལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་གཟུངས་ལས་ཀྱང་རི་སྡིད་དུ་སྡིག་པ་བྱུང་བའི་མཚན་མ་བྱུང་བ་དེ་སྡིད་དུ་  
བཟླས་པ་བྱ་སྟེ། མི་ལམ་ན་ཟས་ངན་ཡ་སྐྱུག་པ་དང་། ཞོ་དང་འོ་མ་ལ་སོགས་བ་  
འཕྱང་བ་དང་སྐྱུགས་པ་དང་ཉི་མ་དང་ལྷ་བ་མཐོང་བ་དང་། ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་འགོ་བ་  
དང་། མི་འབར་བ་དང་། མ་ཉི་དང་མི་ནག་པོ་ཐུབ་པ་དང་། དགོ་སྣོང་དང་དགོ་སྣོང་  
མའི་དགོ་འདུན་མཐོང་བ་དང་། འོ་མ་འབྱུང་བའི་ཤིང་དང་གླང་པོ་དང་ལྷ་མཚོག་དང་  
རི་དང་སེལ་བྱི་དང་ཁང་བཟང་གི་སྡིད་དུ་འཛོག་པ་དང་། ཚོས་ཉན་པ་མིས་ན་སྡིག་པ་  
དང་བྲལ་བར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། སྡིག་པ་བྱུང་བར་ཤེ་སོ། །ཞེས་གསུང་སོ།།

*The Incantation for Exhorting the Goddess too states:*

Repeat the secret words until you get signs that you are being cleaned of your past bad deeds. These signs occur in your dreams, and they include vomiting up some bad food; drinking or vomiting yogurt, milk, or the like; gazing upon the sun or the moon; flying in the sky; seeing a blazing fire; encountering a black ox or a black man; looking upon a gathering of monks or nuns; seeing a tree that gives forth milk; an elephant; the head of a herd; climbing upon a lion throne or to the roof of an exquisite house; or, finally, dreaming that you are listening to a Dharma teaching. Each of these portends that you are freeing yourself from your bad deeds, that you are purifying yourself of their power.

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དཔུང་བཟང་གིས་ཉུས་པ་ལས་ཀྱང་།

།སོ་ག་ནགས་མེས་མཆེད་པའི་མེ་ལྷེ་ཡིས།

།མ་སྐྱིམས་བཞིན་དུ་ཚང་ཚོང་ཀུན་བསྐྱེག་ལྟར།

།བརྐྱས་བརྗོད་མེ་ལ་རྩུལ་བྲིམས་རྒྱང་གིས་སྦྲར།

།བརྩོན་འགུས་ཆེན་པོའི་མེ་ལྷེས་སྐྱེག་པ་བསྐྱེག།

*The Secret Teaching Requested by Pungsang says,*

The flames of a massive fire that spreads  
Through the springtime forest burn away  
The smaller brush without a thought.  
Let the wind of your ethical life  
Ignite the fire of reciting the mantra;  
Let the flames of your intense efforts  
Burn away bad deeds from your past.

།རི་ལྗར་གངས་ལ་ཉི་མའི་འོད་ཟེར་གྱིས།

།གདུངས་ན་གཟི་བརྗིད་མི་བཟོད་འཇུ་བ་བཞིན།

།རྩུལ་བྲིམས་ཉི་མའི་འོད་ཟེར་བརྐྱས་བརྗོད་གྱིས།

།གདུངས་ན་སྐྱེག་པའི་གངས་ཀྱང་ཟད་པར་འགྱུར།

Think of how the rays of the sun  
Burn some patch of snow in their glory,  
And force it to melt away;  
If the sunlight of your ethical life  
And reciting the mantra burn it too,  
The snow of your bad deeds disappears.

།ལྷན་ནག་སྐྱེག་ལ་མར་མེ་ལྷེ་བ་ཡིས།

།ལྷན་ནག་མ་ལུས་སེལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་བཞིན།



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ཁོ་རབས་སྣོད་ནས་བསགས་པའི་སྡིག་པའི་སྐྱེན།

ཁབ་སྐྱེས་བརྗོད་མར་མེས་སྐྱེས་དུ་སེལ་བར་བྱེད།

ཅིས་གསུང་སོ།

When you carry a lamp into a room  
Covered in pitch-black dark it forces  
All the darkness to flee.  
The dark of bad deeds that you've collected  
Over thousands of lives is quickly dispelled  
By the lamp of the secret words.

སྐྱེས་གཟུགས་བྱེད་པ་ནི་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་གཟུངས་ཀྱི་ལེན་ལས་དཔེར་ན་མི་ཞིག་  
ངན་སྐྱེས་ཀྱིས་རིག་པ་ལས་ལེགས་པར་བརྟུན་ཏེ། སྣོས་བྱུགས་ན་དེའི་དྲི་ང་བ་དང་  
བྲལ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ། །དེ་བཞིན་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ལ་དང་བ་རྗེད་ནས་སྐྱེས་  
གཟུགས་བྱེད་ན་མི་དགོ་བ་བཅུ་དང་མཚམས་མེད་པ་ལྟའི་སྡིག་པ་ཡང་བྱང་སྡེ་མི་  
མངོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། །

"Making images" is described in *The Chapter on the Incantation of Those Gone Thus* like this:

Suppose for example a person has by accident touched some vomit; afterwards they wash their hands, and rub some incense powder in them—this then removes all the putrid smell. It's just the same with someone who has found faith in Those Who Have Gone That Way, and who then makes images of them. They are able to clean away their past negative actions—whether it be the ten non-virtues or the five "immediate" evil deeds—and the karma disappears.

བྱེ་བྲག་ཏུ་ནི་བྱང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སེམས་དང་ལྷན་པ་དང་སྦྲིམ་གྱི་གནས་ནས་བྱང་བ་རྒྱལ་  
སྦྲིམས་དང་ལྷན་པའི་སྡིག་པ་བྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ་ཞེ་སོ། །

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More specifically, this works to clean away the past bad deeds of those who are possessed of the Wish for enlightenment, and also for those who have the ethical commitments of those who have left the home life.

སངས་རྒྱལ་མཚོན་པ་བྱེད་པ་ནི་མེ་ཏོག་བཙུགས་པའི་གཟུངས་ལས། གང་གིས་  
སངས་རྒྱལ་ལ་ལོ་བརྒྱ་སྟོང་དུ་བདེ་བའི་ཡོ་བྱད་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱེན་བཀུར་བྱས་པ་  
དང་། ཡང་བྱང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སེམས་དང་ལྡན་པ་གང་གིས་སངས་རྒྱལ་མཚོན་པའི་ཕྱིར་དེ་  
ཡོངས་སུ་སྲུང་ན་ལས་འདས་པའི་མཚོན་ཏེན་ལ་མེ་ཏོག་འགའ་འབྲུལ་ལས། རྒྱ་  
སྒྲིམ་པ་གང་ཅམ་འཕྲོར་རམ། བྱུག་པའི་ཐིག་ལ་འདྲི་འམ་མེ་ཏོག་ཉལ་ཉལ་འཆག་  
གས། བྱུག་སྒྲོམ་དང་མར་མེ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཕྱུལ་ནས་དགའ་བའི་སེམས་ཀྱིས་གོམ་  
པའི་གར་སྐབས་འགའ་བོར་ཏེ་སངས་རྒྱལ་དེ་ལ་ཕྱུག་འཚལ་ལོ། །ཞེས་བརྗོད་པ་དེ་  
དག་ནི་བསྐྱེད་པ་བརྒྱ་ཕྱུག་སྟོང་དུ་སྲུང་ན་འགོར་འགྲོ་བའི་གནས་མིད་དོ་ཞེས་སོ། །

"Making offerings to the Buddhas" is explained in this way in *The Incantation of the Pile of Flowers*:

Suppose that a certain person honors a Buddha by supplying to them everything one would need to be comfortable, for the length of hundred, or even a thousand years. And suppose there's another person who is feeling the Wish for enlightenment, and goes to an offering shrine of one who has passed beyond grief, in order to make offerings to the Buddhas. They make offerings of flowers; or they sprinkle even a palmful of holy water; or smear on the shrine water mixed with scent, or with the crushed powder of flowers; or light some incense, or offer lamps or anything of the like. And then out of sheer joy they dance before the shrine, singing out "I bow to Enlightened Beings." It is not within the realm of possibility that such a person could ever pass to the realms of misery, for even thousands of centuries made of eons instead of years.

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སྐྱེན་གྱི་སྒྲ་བེ་རྒྱུ་འོད་གྱི་མདོ་ལས། བཀའ་དབུ་བསྐྱབ་པའི་གཞི་འགའ་ཞིག་བཟུང་བ་  
དེ་ལས་ཉམས་ཏེ་ངན་སོང་གིས་འཇིགས་པ་དེ་དབུ་སངས་རྒྱས་སྐྱེན་གྱི་སྒྲ་བེ་རྒྱུ་འོད་  
དེ་ལ་མཚོན་པ་སྣ་ཚོགས་བྱེད་ན་ངན་སོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྐྱུ་བ་བསྐྱེད་མེད་པར་ཤེས་པར་  
བྱུང་ཞེས་སོ།།

*The Sutra of the Medicine Buddha Named "Light of Lapis Blue"* says too that:

Suppose some person commits themselves to some number of the ethical rules, and then fails in their commitments—they are then at risk of the terrors of the lower realms. You should understand though that—if they make a wide variety of offerings to this Enlightened Being, to the Medicine Buddha whose name is "Light of Lapis Blue"—then they will never undergo the pain of those lower realms.

སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་མཚན་འཛིན་པ་ནི་ཡང་མདོ་སྒྲེ་ལས།  
སངས་རྒྱས་དེའི་མཚན་སྲུང་ན་ལམ་དུ་བྲགས་པ་དེ་ངན་སོང་དུ་འགྲོ་བ་ནི་གནས་མེད་  
དེ་གོ་སྐབས་མ་ཡིན་ཅོ། །ཀུན་དབུ་ལོ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་སྐྱོད་ཡུལ་འདི་ཡིད་ཆེས་བར་  
དཀའ། །བྱོད་དད་ཅིང་ཡིད་ཆེས་པ་ནི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་མཐུན། །བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་  
དཔའ་སྐྱེ་བ་གཅིག་གིས་ཐོགས་པ་རྣམས་མ་གཏོགས་པར་འདི་ནི་ཉན་ཐོས་དང་རང་  
སངས་རྒྱས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་མ་ཡིན་ཅོ།།

"Keeping the names of Buddhas and bodhisattvas" is described in sutra as follows:

Suppose that a person hears the slightest whisper of the holy name of this Buddha. For them then to pass to the lower realms is nothing which is even possible, nothing for which there is any chance at all. O Ananda, this way in which the Buddhas do their work is something difficult even to believe. The fact that you do believe at this moment is only due to the immense power of the Enlightened Ones. This by the way applies only to those

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bodhisattvas who have but one life left to go; it can never apply to those of the Listener type, or those that we call "Self-Made Buddhas" [these are two types of the lower way, who lack the Wish to reach enlightenment for all other living beings].

གང་དག་བསྐྱེན་གནས་ལ་གནས་ཏེ་ལོ་གཅིག་གམ་ལྔ་བ་གསུམ་དུ་བསྐྱབ་པའི་གཞི་  
འཛིན་ཅིང་། བདག་གི་དགོ་བའི་རྩ་བ་འདིས་རྒྱབ་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཚེ་དཔག་  
མེད་ཀྱི་ཞིང་བདེ་བ་ཅན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག་ཤིག་ཅེས་སྒྲོན་ལམ་བཏབ་པ་དེས་སངས་རྒྱས་  
འདིའི་མཚན་ཐོས་ན་དེ་འཛིན་བའི་ཚེ་བྱང་རྒྱུ་སེམས་དཔའ་བརྒྱད་རྩུ་འཕྲུལ་གྱིས་  
ལྷགས་ནས་ལམ་བསྟན་ཏེ། དེར་པད་མ་ལས་བརྒྱས་ཏེ་སྐྱེའོ་ཞེས་སོ།།

Suppose there's a person who observes the rules of their lifetime layman's vows even for the length of a year, or just three months, and who makes the following prayer: "May I, by this accumulation of good karma, take birth to the west, in the blissful paradise of Limitless Life—Amitayus."

When they make this prayer, then they hear this enlightened being's name; and because of this then, when they die, the eight great bodhisattvas arrive by miraculous means at their sides, to show them the path. And then they take birth, totally complete, in the middle of a lotus in this paradise.

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### Using a Flamethrower to Cut Your Nails

*This is a preliminary word-by-word transcription of a lecture given by Geshe Michael Roach at the Friend's Meeting House in New York City. The section up to the asterisks was accidentally left off the tape and has been restored by Geshe Michael.*

Tonight I want to talk about *tawa*: worldview, how we view the world, our belief system about where things come from, and what makes things happen. Why do we even have a *tawa*? Why do we keep a worldview? What is a worldview supposed to do for us? Okay, Helen—what do you think?

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*[Helen: It's supposed to explain why things happen. Because if we know why things happen, then we can make the things happen that make us happy. So a worldview is supposed to explain our lives, and help us make our lives happy.]*

Good: a worldview should have two goals: it should explain our lives, and it should serve us; by understanding why things happen in our lives—good things like a friend, bad things like cancer—we can make the good things happen, and stop the bad things. This is the goal of our lives. This is the goal of a human life. This is the reason to have a worldview. This is the only reason.

We'll talk first tonight about the pieces of a good worldview, a worldview that works—one that not only works, but which serves us, which makes us happy, which gives us everything we want. You can imagine a different kind of worldview, one that seemed to work, but didn't make us happy; a worldview that seemed to explain the world, but which didn't serve the same people who have created it to serve them, didn't serve us. It would be like—well, say you had to cut your fingernails, your fingernails were too long. You could use a pair of fingernail clippers, or you could use a flamethrower. You can't deny that the flamethrower could get your fingernails off. But it would also take off your hand and much of your arm, and leave you with pain, incredible pain. Some worldviews are like that; our worldview is like that, the worldview of our country, the worldview of western civilization itself. It seems to work, but it leaves us with the problem of pain, it does not solve that problem, it does not serve us, as a true worldview should—and so it is not a worldview we should keep any more.

A true worldview in Tibetan is called *yang dakpay tawa*. The *yang dakpay* means "pure," or "true." The *tawa* means "worldview." I'm going to give you a taste of that view, a pure worldview. It solves both problems: it explains why things happen, why all things happen, and it serves us—it brings us true and ultimate happiness. And it is the combination of two great truths: it is the marriage of karma and emptiness.

A true worldview should explain every single detail of our lives, inside and outside: it should explain where the world comes from, where I come from, where every thought and detail of me comes from, where everything that ever happens to me comes from. And so it should apply to every single atom of existence, inner and outer. It should apply to the universe, it should apply to our globe, it should apply to my house and family and thoughts. It should apply to the pen I am using to write on the blackboard during this lecture.

Look now at the pen as I hold it up. I'll hold it up high. I won't move it. Just sit and look at it.

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Look at it for a while. Don't worry right now about worldviews, don't worry about beliefs or philosophy. Just look at the pen, without worrying about it, without analyzing it at all. In the Middle-Way school, in the highest school of Buddhism, this is called *matak machepar*: looking at the pen without checking it, without analyzing it.

Sit now for a minute, and look at it. Count out ten breaths, and we'll all just look at it, silently.

*[Class looks at pen silently.]*

Now look at the pen again, and pretend you are just your eye, without the mind any more. Your eye can only see shapes and colors, it can't think anything. It can't think, "This is a pen." Look at the pen this way. Now it's not a pen any more; instead, it's just a cylinder—this one is a white cylinder, with a section of blue on one end that we used to call the "top" of the pen. Look at the cylinder for a while, be quiet, look at it for the length of ten breaths.

*[Class looks.]*

Now consciously alternate between these two modes of looking at the pen. Look at it for a few breaths as a pen; then look at it for a few breaths in the way your eye does by itself, just a white and blue cylinder. Look now at it as a pen, just a plain pen.

*[Class looks.]*

Now switch to the other mode. Look at it as a simple cylinder of white and blue. Forget that you ever knew it was a pen.

*[Class looks.]*

Back to pen mode now. Switch back to seeing it as a pen, thinking of it as a pen.

*[Class looks.]*

Now back to the cylinder.

*[Class looks.]*

Good. Now I'll draw a few things on the transparency, and you can look at them on the overhead projector. First there is your eye; that is, your sense power, or your eyesight.

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*[Draws an eyeball on the transparency.]*

We call this the *wangpo*, or sense power. Next we'll draw the cylinder, out here in front of the eye. Remember, it's not a pen yet, not to the eye. It's just a cylinder of white and blue.

*[Draws a cylinder on the transparency, half white, half blue, in front of the eyeball.]*

We call this the *dokjay chu*, the thing that we're going to think of as a pen—the raw data out there, the collection of parts, the sum of the roundness and longness and blueness and whiteness. Notice something important here: it's a sum of parts, it's a complete collection of shapes and colors, but it's not a pen yet. If it were a pen already, the eye would see it that way, but it doesn't. No—right now, it's still only raw data, still only a pile of parts, waiting to be organized into an object, waiting to be given its identity. And here comes the one who's going to give it that identity.

*[Draws a brain on the transparency, behind the eyeball.]*

This is your mind. This drawing of a brain represents your mind. Actually the mind is invisible, and ineffable, and not something physical. Some of it stays around the brain, and some of it stays all over your body, and actually anywhere you can think of. But that's another story. Right now we'll draw it as a brain.

The eyeball senses the colors and shapes of the cylinder and transmits this information to the mind. It's amazing that this fact was taught more than fifteen centuries ago: Buddhist scripture says that there are cells in a patch at the back of your eyeball, an optic nerve, and that these cells are sensitive to colors and outlines, shapes. The nerve picks up this information and sends it to the mind. It tells the mind, "There's some raw data out here, some kind of cylinder, with some spots of blue color and white color. What do you think we have here?"

The mind is handed just these clues, these bits and pieces of information, raw data, and has to figure out what the object is.

Based on the clues it receives from the eye, based on some incomplete but suggestive information, the mind formulates a picture of an object. It takes the bits and pieces of raw data and creates a perfect little mental image. If you think about it for even a minute, the way we think we see things is a little too perfect. The images you see as you move your eyes around the room are too perfect; you couldn't actually be seeing every single detail, you couldn't be seeing perfect little discrete objects. You can't for example see the back of any object, but in your mind's eye you see them as three-dimensional.

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This is an indication that you are only looking at your image of the object, an image in your mind. This is called the *dun chi*, this little picture is called the *dun chi*. Here, I'll draw this mental image over here, near the brain. It will look like a perfect little pen. I'll put little light rays around it, so you can remember, it's just a little image in the mind.

It's very important to realize what's happening when you perceive an object. There is raw data out there, a collection of parts, waiting to get an identity. And then there is a mental picture of a finished object in the mind. The mind then goes and imposes this mental picture on the parts. It takes this image and overlays it on the collection of raw data. Here, watch, I'll fold the transparency so the mental image lays over the drawing of the cylinder. This is exactly how it works. Your mind is getting raw data, only bits and pieces of an object, clues, and it draws up a perfect little mental picture.

It's very important to realize what happens next. The mind overlays the little picture upon the raw data; it imposes it upon the data. This labelling state of mind, this state of mind that overlays the image on the parts, that imposes the image upon the parts, is called the *dokjey*.

But next our mind goes and makes a very big mistake: it begins to believe that the mental image *is* the finished object, and that it's out there, that there is an object out there on its own, independent of the mind. It begins to mistake the image for the finished thing.

The "finished thing" of course is the collection of raw data *plus* the image imposed upon it; this finished object is called, in Tibetan, a *takpay chu*. And this is the way the things around us actually exist. This is what, in the highest school of Buddhism, we mean when we say "dependent origination": the very existence of things depends upon a perfect little mental image imposed upon a collection of raw data. It is the sum of all the parts *plus* the image, meaning *plus* the way we think of the thing.

This explains how things work, how things exist. But remember, a worldview must also serve us, it must serve humanity, it must bring us real happiness. What does my happiness have to do with little mental images and all that stuff?

To answer this question, we have to see where the little mental image is coming from. Why did we choose this particular mental image? Did we have to choose this image? Would everyone have chosen that image?

If you think for a moment, you can see easily that we could have chosen another mental image. Suppose a dog had entered the room while we were



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looking at the raw data—while the eye was looking at the white and blue and roundness and longness. His eye would sense the same raw data, but he would not think of the cylinder as a "pen." He might very likely view the cylinder rather as a nice thing to chew on, only as a "chewable object," for he cannot conceptualize a pen.

The thing we have to ask next is, who's right? The human or the dog? This is a serious animal rights question. Is the human more right, or is the dog more right? Is the cylinder a pen, or is the cylinder a chewable object? Which is it *really*?

You can see in a moment that the cylinder can be either—you can see it quite justifiably as a pen, or as a chewable object, it just depends on who's looking. It's no more a pen than a chewable object, and it's no more a chewable object than a pen. It is *empty* of being, necessarily, either one. In a sense then, it is *blank*. And this is the real meaning of the word "emptiness." Then cylinder has no nature of its own. The cylinder has no identity of its own. Its identity is granted by the mind of the one who is looking at it.

This same fact applies, by the way, to the parts of the cylinder itself, to the components of the raw data itself, but we'll talk about that some other time.

I want to emphasize something at this point. I haven't said a single thing yet tonight that a normal, thinking American cannot accept immediately. Nothing controversial, nothing debatable. Any American, with only a few minutes of thinking about it, can accept everything I've said so far.

But still we have the question—what's all this got to do with me? What's all this do for me? What's the use of having this way of looking at the world, this worldview?

The key here is to go back to the *dun chi*, that little mental image. We have to ask the question, why did I have the *dun chi* of a pen? Why did the dog have a *dun chi* of a chewable object? Why do I automatically think of this cylinder as a pen? Why does the dog automatically think of it as a chewable object?

I think it's important first to eliminate the possibility that we can look at it any way we choose to. It's not the case that I can just look at the cylinder any way I feel like: I can't for example just decide to have a mental image of it as a cylinder of pure gold, or pure diamond. When I go to the dentist, for example, I can't just decide that I will have a mental image of the pain as eating a marshmallow. I can't just decide to see a speeding taxicab as a pillow just before it crushes my legs. Apparently these things are forced upon us, these mental images are forced upon us.

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We seem to have a little leeway about how we think of things, for example whether we view our enemy as our teacher or not, but again there are serious limitations, and the extent to which we are able to do so is itself another image forced upon us. How we interpret any particular collection of parts seems to be dictated to us by other factors, by other forces. Something is painting in the blanks of the picture, and making us see either a pen or a chewable thing, and it doesn't seem to have much to do with what we want. Pain stays, no matter how much we wish it would go away.

According to Buddhism, what fills in the empty canvas is your mental imprints. Tiny seeds or propensities or imprints that are ripening in your mind, and are forcing you to interpret the raw data as you do. Each being is carrying around his own set of imprints or impressions from the past. And these little impressions dictate what we think we see.

A human is forced by certain imprints in his or her mind to see the cylinder as a pen. A dog is forced by their own imprints to see the cylinder as a chewable object. If you think about it, *it is exactly this way of looking at things, forced upon each of them by his own set of imprints, that makes one a human, and the other a dog.* This is what it is to be a human or a dog, to see yourself and your world as a human or a dog. And again, this is forced upon you; you are impelled to see empty objects in the way a dog would, or in the way a human would.

So why one and not the other? Buddhism says that we must focus first upon the content of each experience. The experience of living as a dog is, for the most part, painful. Its content is largely pain. Buddhism says that the cause for a painful experience must itself be negative also. And so it says that the imprint which causes us to see a world and a life of pain must itself be negative, it must have been planted in a negative way.

According to Buddhism, negative imprints are planted in my mind any time I say, or do, or even think anything negative, especially about other people. They stay in the mind for some time, gradually building up power, and then finally ripen, forcing upon us a *dun chi*, a mental image. Buddhism says this is where the mental images come from. Buddhism says this is how the images are forced upon us. And these mental images decide, absolutely, every detail of every experience we ever have in our entire lives.

All pain therefore consists of mental images forced upon us by negative thoughts or actions or words we did in the past. And all good experiences are the opposite.

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This principle is called the law of karma, and at this point you may not be able to accept what I say immediately. You have to think about it. You do have to admit that it makes sense. It seems right that negative images in our own mind should come from negative impressions created there in the past. But either way you do have to admit that the mental images are there, and that they are running our experience of the world. They must have come from somewhere; they could not have come just out of the blue. We have to think hard, we have to decide, where they come from. It is not just an accident; nothing is random, there are causes for everything.

That's all I have to say about *yang dakpay tawa*, about the "pure worldview." You can draw your own conclusions. Our world is empty, no objects have any identity of their own. What they are, what they are *for each one of us*, depends completely on how we see them, and how we see them seems to be forced upon us by certain forces in our minds, by certain seeds lying there.

You have to think about it. Buddhism says that even life and death are only the results of mental images, much less all the suffering and pain that goes on in the entire world in any given day. If these mental images can be changed, if each individual can affect his or her mental images, then—in theory at least—all this pain can be avoided.

The implication is that the entire pain of the entire world, and the death of every creature who ever lived upon this planet, was unnecessary. It could have been avoided. It is an unnecessary tragedy, unnecessary carnage, of global proportions, throughout our recorded history. It was simply a tragic mistake, a mistake due to lack of knowledge, due to the lack of a pure worldview.

This again would imply that a worldview which does not explain the events of our world this way is not just mistaken or wrong in a philosophical way, but mistaken in a way that kills us, and that perpetuates the entire amount of pain humanity will ever have to feel. If this is true, the stakes are very high. The welfare of millions, billions, of living beings is at stake. A slip in worldview is not just a point of argument for philosophers and theologians, it is responsible for denying happiness to unthinkable numbers of people.

Worldviews that do not work, that do not assure our happiness and prevent pain and death, worldviews that do not and cannot explain the crucial events of our lives, are called in Tibetan *lokta*: mistaken worldviews, the opposite of a pure or correct worldview. We'll go back now to this idea of a mistaken worldview, to a worldview which fails us and fails to explain our lives. We'll go back to the idea of using a flamethrower to cut your fingernails.

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You could say then that the flamethrower doesn't work in the short term, and it doesn't work in the long term—meaning it either doesn't cut my nails, or it does cut my nails but it hurts like hell, you know what I mean? I mean, it functions apparently, but it doesn't make me happy. If it doesn't function, you reject it immediately. If it functioned but didn't make you happy, you'd reject it after a while. It's like a girlfriend that you decided...anyway, you know. If it functioned but it didn't make you happy, sooner or later the relationship is going to fall apart. That's the point at which you reject a relationship, or you reject a *tawa*. You reject it. You say, "that doesn't work." You do. And it has to do two things: it not only has to work, it has to make you happy. Okay?

Now we'll go through the *tawa*'s of the world, the views you find in our western world. Let's go through the *tawa*'s that we grew up with. I call these "Mrs Melvin *tawa*'s." For those of you who don't know Mrs Melvin, she was my first-grade teacher in the elementary school, and if you ever saw *The Far Side* cartoon, what's his name? Gary Larson? Yeah, she looks just like that. I mean, I can draw it.

*[Draws a figure on the board.]*

It's like...this'll be good...she had those glasses, that go up like cat's eyes, and she had that bun hair up there, and she was really strict. And then she would come into first grade and she would tell us her version of the world. And this is some lady, you know, she's fifty years old, all she thinks about is chocolates and daytime TV shows, and she's teaching first grade, and she's teaching us our worldview... I'm Michael Roach at seven or eight years old and I'm being told how the world works, by this lady. And I'm going to carry that for the rest of my life. If she's crazy or wonderful or beautiful or intelligent or stupid or whatever she says, this is going to be my version of reality for a long time, you know? And I may reject certain parts of it later on, but not for a long time; like, she said a certain kind of people are bad, and then when I'm forty I find out that they're not so bad.

Well, she said that the Russians are really bad people. I remember when I went to Russia the first time, and we worked together for like a week. And then they turned around in the car one day, and they said, "Well, how do you like Russians? You know, what do you think about us?"

And I said, "Well, I'll tell you a story. When I was in Mrs Melvin's class, the bell would ring, the alarm would ring, and we had to get under the desks." Like this is going to help you when the atomic bomb goes off, right?

"And they'd say, 'Get under the desk,' and we'd get under the desk. And we'd say, 'Why?' And they'd say, 'Because the roof might collapse.' And we'd say

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'Why?' And they'd say, ' 'Cuz the Russians are sending over these rockets to kill us, and they hate all American people, and they're going to try to drop an atomic bomb on us, and you have to hide under the desk for that!'"

And I joked with them, I said that that was my impression of Russians for many years—Mrs Melvin's version of Russians. And they said, "We had exactly the same lady! In first grade, you know, and she told us the same thing about you—but you seem quite normal." And that's a worldview. My worldview changed in one week of being with those guys. I said, "You seem to be just great. You seem to be like all the kids I grew up with." And we had a good time. And I, my worldview changed. Mrs Melvin's worldview got shifted a little bit.

What I'm trying to say is, what are the major parts of an American worldview? And I'm gonna give you three. We talked about it in the Thursday night class. I'm going to give you three versions of the worldview that come from 730 A.D., okay? Twelve hundred and sixty-seven years ago. These were the three worldviews that people had. Just general people living in those days.

The first worldview is that things just happen by accident, that there is no reason for the events of our lives, good and bad just come at random, and so there's not really anything we can do about it—just try to be as happy as we can, try to get by. Some poet called it "lives of quiet desperation." Perhaps this view is the strongest among us; we simply don't want to think, we've simply stopped thinking about why all these things happen to us—losing our friends, getting old, death, sickness, why we can't even love one another. I won't say much about this viewpoint, because if you're here tonight, if you're sitting here, you have some feeling that things don't happen without a cause. Nothing happens without a cause. We just haven't been able to find out the cause of why these things are happening. If you are here tonight you are already to the point of thinking this way. Your reason, your instinct, tells you that there must be a cause, must be a reason. Science, and all western schools of reasoning, are right in one thing: everything has a reason, everything has a cause. Some are easy to find, and some are not. But you are here tonight to find them, so let's go on.

Now say *jewo kolpo*.

[Class repeats.]

*Jewo* means like a "lord," or a "master"; it's an old word. Like in medieval Europe or something, you know, a master of a big house with lots of servants. *Kolpo* means "servants," and *jewo* means "master." Master Shantideva and Gyeltsab Je call this the "Master-Servant Theory." This is the second worldview,

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the master-servant theory of the world. And basically, with an individual, it's the idea or view that I'm in charge of my body and my mind. Okay?

There's a me who's in charge of my body and mind. What does "in charge" mean? I own them. What does "I own" mean? I can do what I want with them, right? When you own a house, somebody signs a quit-claim deed. You assume the mortgage, you get the bills now for the phone and the electricity, and they say, "You own it." And you say, "Why?" And they say, "You can do anything you want with it now." Legally nobody else will try to do anything with it. You own it. What does "own it" mean? You can do anything you want with it.

Do I own this shirt? I mean—forget a house, forget a car, forget your career, and your family and everything else—the shirt you have on right now, okay? Do you own that shirt?

*[Class is quiet.]*

Come on, this is not a big question, you know. Do you own the shirt or not?

Of course you own this shirt. Can I do anything I want with this shirt? Do I control this shirt? I mean, that's the test of ownership, right? That's the test of ownership. So you're saying, there'll never come a time that I won't own this shirt. You know? Am I in control of this shirt right now? Can you guarantee me that, before midnight tonight, this shirt will not be torn away from me? Can you guarantee me that within—I'm not talking, okay, a week, I mean even American Express gives you a week to take the thing back, okay? I'm asking for three and a half hours, okay? Will I own this shirt at twelve o'clock? Do I have control?

How long does control have to be before I own it? Five minutes? Ten minutes? When you say I own a house, how long do I have to control it to say I own it? Can you tell me that I will own this particular shirt at midnight tonight? Because that's control. If you can't give me three and a half hours of ownership, then don't tell me I'm in control of this shirt. Do I control this shirt? Can you guarantee me that by midnight tonight I will not have lost this shirt?

No, you can't. At the best—least worst, I mean—maybe someone will just come in my room and steal it tonight, okay? I mean like that. Or maybe I drop it on my way home or something; you know, it falls out of my bag or something. Worst case scenario, I die before midnight, okay? But in either case, I lose it, someone mugs me and steals it, somebody rips it off from my room, or I die. You can't say that I control this shirt, okay? That's not a correct *tawa*.

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That's what I'm trying to say: the idea that you control your body or your mind is false, it's not a correct *tawa*. It doesn't satisfy either one of Helen's requirements for a good *tawa*—it doesn't work, and it doesn't make you happy, okay. Neither one. Seriously. It's not a good *tawa*. Why? It doesn't give you what you want, and it doesn't make you happy. The idea that you are in control of these things is just not true. It doesn't work, okay?

In fact it would make me very unhappy, right? By midnight I might be very unhappy about this shirt. Somebody else got it, I couldn't control it. It wasn't true that I controlled it; thinking this way couldn't make me happy. That *tawa* doesn't work. Do I control my body? Do I own my body? Is this a good worldview, that there's a Michael Roach who's running the show? There's a Michael Roach who...can I make my body move if I want? I'm gonna raise my left hand. Ready? One, two, three!

*[Succeeds in raising his left hand.]*

Okay, do I control the body? Looks like. Put it down...wow! But do I really have ownership and control of this body? Can you tell me that by midnight tonight it's any different than my shirt? You can't. You know, that viewpoint doesn't work. It doesn't work, and it doesn't make me happy. You can reject that viewpoint.

You can also reject that on a grand scale; meaning, is there some guy watching over me who controls everything? By the way, this is another part of the American *tawa*. Remember what I'm talking about: what is our American *tawa*? It came out of, it grew out of Judeo-Christian thought. If you're a western-oriented American, then you grew up with this Judeo-Christian thought. You grew up with the idea of a creator, or a guy, who's controlling things. I would say that this guy has at least two qualities: omnipotent, can do anything he or she wants; and omniscient, knows every sparrow's sorrows and hopes, right? Watches over every sparrow, even. And then compassionate too, you know? Cares about human beings. So he has these three qualities. This is a *tawa*. This is a *tawa*. How many Americans hold it one hundred percent? Maybe none. How many hold it ten percent? Maybe a lot.

I was in an airplane one time, and I thought it was going down, and I said to myself, "Jesus!" You know, I mean, something comes out of your childhood, the thought just leaps up into your mind. Like, along with Mrs Melvin there was Father Smith, and my viewpoint is a little bit of each. I'm not making fun of those viewpoints, and I'm not criticizing them. I'm just saying, "Do they fit the requirement for a correct view? Do they work? Do they make me happy?" 'Cuz if they don't, they're just like using a flamethrower to cut your nails. I should just drop them. Are they easy to drop? That's another question.

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So, how's that *tawa*? Does there appear to be a guy who can make or create diseases? Does there appear to be an omniscient being who's watching your every thought to see if you're happy or not? And does it seem to be the case that they care about us, a lot? Does it seem to be the case, you know, is it the case that...I mean, suppose you had a group of children, like we have a kids' class, and they were sitting there in the kids' class, and they're like innocent, right? They don't know much, they're just a bunch of kids.

And then, suppose then that you were in total control of them, you know, you're the babysitter, you're the class teacher. I'm talking about our kids' class at the Three Jewels bookstore—we don't have a big class, it's five kids. And suppose they come in there, and then one of them picks up a razor blade and starts cutting his hand, or slicing his fingers.

Wouldn't you stop them? I mean, wouldn't you just stop it? If you're in control of this little group of kids, it would be perverted not to stop them. It would be perverted not to say, "Give me that razor blade. Stop that!" If you only had five kids to watch and you could watch them all, and then suddenly they started hurting themselves, you would stop them. You wouldn't let it go on. Or else, or else you're some kind of evil being or something. So I don't think...I mean, that's a *tawa* that doesn't work, you know.

And I wish it did work. I mean, I'm not criticizing it because I want you to all donate your money to Buddhism or something like that. I'm not. It's not why I'm here. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying it doesn't work. That *tawa* doesn't work. It hurts people.

I had an Aunty Blanche who lived in Michigan, and she was suffering from some horrible disease, you know, and I asked my mother, "What should we do?" And I asked Father Smith, "What should we do?" And they said, "Go pray." So I went to All Saints' Church near where we lived, in downtown Phoenix, in Arizona, and I sat in the pew, and I got down, and I said, "Please make Aunty Blanche better," you know? And she died.

I'm not trying to be critical. I'm just saying it's a *tawa* which doesn't work. It doesn't work. It just didn't work. And I confirmed that when I was ten years old. Did I become a Buddhist the next day? No. Did I start to wonder? Yes.

Was I just starting to try to be patient with this guy, maybe he just didn't hear me or something, you know? Yeah, you know, you had to make some compromise in your mind, like—well maybe he didn't hear me, or maybe I'm a bad person so Aunty Blanche has to die, or something like that. But it doesn't make...it starts to not make sense. And by the time you get sixteen or something, whether you admit it or not, you've rejected it. You don't believe



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it any more. You don't find people...I went to college in New Jersey, I used to go to chapel. Nobody went to chapel, you know. Why? It didn't work. Some people came 'cuz their parents had told them, but what I'm saying is that it didn't work. It just didn't work. That viewpoint didn't work. The *tawa* didn't work.

How about science? That's the next one. What I'm saying is that on a personal level, the idea that I have any control, immediate control over my body and my mind, is wrong. It's a bad *tawa*. It's not true. I can't tell you that I won't have cancer next week. I don't control this body. I am not in charge of this body, okay? I can't tell you that. And on a universal level, this is not a *tawa*. It doesn't work.

There is no guy up there who's all-compassionate, all-knowing, and all-powerful, because people around me are suffering constantly. My close friends, my dearest friends are suffering all day today. I can't do anything about it. And this guy is just letting it go on, like watching a child cut themselves with a razor blade? I don't, I don't believe it. I just can't accept it. I don't agree with that *tawa*. Okay, that's the second one. These are *tawa*'s that were being talked about thirteen hundred years ago, but I think it's a paradigm. I think all humans, no matter when they lived, they started having one of three ideas about the world.

What's the third one? Say *dul trarab*. *Dul trarab* in Buddhist philosophy means "atom." *Dul* means "particle," and *trarab* means "finest," so *dul trarab* means "atomic particle." Master Vasubandu, in 350 A.D., describes things down to sub-atomic particles. He runs out of words to describe them. He gets down to the size of a flea's egg, and then he keeps getting smaller and smaller, and he begins to run out of words for these tiny particles, so he starts using animals. He calls them things like bullicles, sheepicles, rabbiticles; you know, and he starts making up words for them because there's no words to describe something that small. And it's interesting that modern physicists do the same thing—you know, make up names like quarks, smorks, smurf—you know what I mean. They run out of meaningful words so they start making, they just make up neat words for it 'cuz there's no word for it, and it's the same thing.

But there was a school of Buddhism that said "the ultimate reality of all objects lies in their atomic particles." Whether or not Michael Roach gets cancer, the questions are all to be answered on an atomic level. If we can isolate that virus, if we can change the DNA of the AIDS cells, you know, we can, we can cure people. We can get down to a molecular level and an atomic level, and all things can be fixed that way. All objects can be understood.

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And their ultimate reality, physical matter, is that there are tiny particles which are the basic building blocks of all matter. If you understood how to manipulate them properly, you could stop AIDS, you could stop other kinds of viruses, you may even be able to stop old age, or something like that. If you could get down into the DNA and the genetic code and manipulate it a certain way, then...And also the brain: there's the left brain and the right brain, and if you get into the left brain, halfway back, and you inject a certain chemical, then this person gets more calm, or they don't have such bad memories of their uncle, or something like that. Everything, all the truth, is to be found on the molecular level, okay?

And this idea is seventeen hundred years old, much older. What it means is that people tend to think this way through every generation. Throughout history, people have thought, that if they could just find the smallest piece of something, they could manipulate it and they could change our lives. And you can call it "science" for all I care, the "scientific viewpoint." Do most of the people in this room seriously think that they came, or all the women think that they came into being, because some guy broke a piece of his rib off, you know, and this other guy did voodoo, and then suddenly there was a woman? I mean, how many people in this room seriously believe that? And if you had not been told that when you were a kid, how many people would ever dream that up? In this room? Seriously, okay? Seriously.

You know, I mean, you're kind of quiet right now. You're like, "Oh, are we supposed to be saying that kind of thing?" Why not, you know? If a Tibetan came here, I've tried to explain to Tibetans about this stuff, "Well, you know, the first woman, you know, this guy was lonely and this other guy came along, he's much stronger, and he reached inside and broke his rib out and made this lady." And they're like, "No, no. It was a monkey who made it with a, a..." There's this old Tibetan thing about the monkey and I think a gazelle, and the monkey and the gazelle got together and they created the first man.

And they say it wasn't the rib at all, you know, and then you're like...then it dawns on you that both ideas are just as silly. It's just that you grew up with one. And if you'd said that kind of thing at home, you know, "Come on, Mom, who'd believe that? The Tibetans say it was this monkey and this gazelle." And then Mom says something like, "No, they're crazy." But why does the rib thing make more sense? It doesn't. Come on, you know what I mean? It's silly. It's just silly. It's just another thing like...every culture has some silly idea about how the first man came to be. But it's not like that. It's ah, I don't think anyone in this room seriously entertains that thing.

I mean, maybe five percent of Father Smith is left in you. You know, he was a nice guy. The people who taught you your belief systems, the ones I had,

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were nice. Mrs Melvin was a great person. She really was a kind person, and she was a great teacher. But about this part she made a boo-boo. And I'm not afraid to correct her, okay. About this part she was wrong, and about this part, Father Smith was wrong. I don't believe that anymore, I don't think anyone in this room seriously -- you know, if I ask you for more than thirty seconds, nobody will insist that every woman in this room ultimately came from some guy's rib or something like that. I mean, you won't hold that.

And if I push farther and say, is there an omniscient, omnipotent, and totally compassionate being who could let this go on for more than a day in New York City? Come on. You know, I don't think the people in here are holding that viewpoint. You still have a little bit of Father Smith stuff in your mind. You still have that, and you have it to different degrees, and you have it in a conscious and in a subconscious level. You have both. Probably the subconscious is stronger 'cuz you grew up with it.

Everything you grew up with is better. It's called the "butterknife syndrome," where you go to your friend's house when you're six years old, and the butterknives don't look like the butterknives in your house and so you say, "What is that?" And they say, "It's a butterknife." And you say, "No, butterknives don't look like that. They have a bigger handle, and they're longer." And they say, "No, but in our house this is a butterknife." And you say, "No, no, butterknives don't look like that." And they say "No, no, try it," and you try it and it works about the same. And you say, "Yeah, it is a butterknife." And you say, "I learned something, you know, the butterknives in my house are not the only butterknives there are." But you have certain things that stay with you from your childhood. And they stay with you from your culture.

If you lived with Tibetans for more than ten years or so, a lot of that would disappear. Because it's just something that your culture made up. It's not true. It's not true that all the women in this room came from somebody getting lonely and breaking off a rib, and something like that. It's just not true and it doesn't make any sense. But what I'm saying is you keep a certain percentage of it.

Now science is different. Your belief in science is different. I don't say everyone in here is a Judeo-Christian who believes really that people could come from somebody's rib, you know what I mean? Or that some incident with a snake ten thousand years ago is responsible for all the pain in the world. It just doesn't make any sense. But science is different. And I would say everyone's view—*tawva*—in this room is about ninety-nine percent science, okay? The one percent of the rib and the snake and all that is all that's left. I don't believe you have that one seriously, but I would say that most of the people in this room believe in science. We have to look at that *tawva*.

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We'll take a break now, but think about it while you eat or drink. Does it work? Does the scientific idea work? And then, two: does it achieve its goal, which is to make people happy? You know, to bring you happiness. Does it work? Does it get things to work as you said? And does it make you happy? 'Cuz if it doesn't do that it's like keeping a flamethrower to cut your nails—you should just reject it if there's something better, okay? So, take a break, and come back in like ten minutes, okay? And then we'll finish by nine, okay?

[break]

Alright, the science view, the *tawa* that if you could get down to atomic particles, you could cure everything, you know, and this one is very hard, this one's going to be hard because you really do believe in it. When I joke about the guy's rib and all that kind of stuff, nobody gets...nobody freaks out in the whole room. Nobody's like objecting, you know, like, it would seem silly to object.

But what about what you would call the idea of science? For example: penicillin. You know, think about penicillin. Why does penicillin work? You know, somebody discovered this thing, and they found a scientific way to make it synthetically, you know, make things...I think it was some kind of a fungus or something, and then a mold. And then they figured out a way to get it synthetically, or something, the same chemicals. The same chains of atoms and molecules appear to work in people in a consistent way so the FDA approves it. You see what I mean? If it killed half the people who used it, and helped half the people who used it, the FDA would say, you know, "Let's work on it a little longer." You know what I mean?

Think about the principles that we understand about aerodynamics. If it were true that they only worked half the time...you know, I always say, if the stewardess on Southwest Airlines at Newark airport, as you got onto the plane, asked you to sign this release waiver, and she said, "We kind of understand why this flies, but half the time it just falls down, so if you wouldn't mind just initialling on that line." I mean you wouldn't do that. You wouldn't get on that plane, you see what I mean? You would say, "No, when you figure out the aerodynamic principles that make it fly, then I'll get back to you." You would say that. You see what I mean?

And the FDA doesn't approve penicillin until it doesn't kill too many people. If it helps a lot of people, and hurts only a few people, then they approve it, you know? And it's a certain chain of molecules that is approved. And it's a certain angle of metal and a certain velocity of the propeller which is known to make a plane fly.

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So can we say that science has been successful in two senses. They have made happen what you wanted to happen, you see what I mean? They've made the body better. The people who have very bad infections, and if they shoot it with penicillin a lot then it goes away faster than with the people who used to get infections and not use penicillin—and those big metal things tend to fly almost all the time. You know, it's almost infallible that it will take off and fly, and stay up in the air until you get to your hometown in the Midwest or something, and then it comes down gracefully and you walk off. Science has been successful because the thing works, and it contributes to our happiness. So people like you and me believe it. We hold that *tawa*.

Now, for me to attack that *tawa*, for me to say that *tawa* is wrong, is very difficult. You won't believe me to start with, but I will start to throw out some ideas, and I mean it only came in my mind about a week ago, okay? I was studying the wrong views from the eighth century and science was listed. I mean, they didn't call it science but it was the same thing, and I'm like, "Wait a minute, that's not wrong. You know, planes fly, penicillin works, right?"

But you get into this thing nowadays, something's happening to penicillin. What? It's becoming resistant. Like, they say, they blame it kind of on AIDS and stuff like that. Because the people's bodies are resistant to penicillin then viruses adapt themselves or something, or something about the cells, penicillin doesn't work as well against those cells any more. And then eventually penicillin itself doesn't work any more. And they're very concerned, because penicillin has been a great boon, you know, antibiotics has been a great boon to mankind. It has saved millions and millions of people. And now, something about those atoms, the same mixture of atoms, is changing.

Is the molecular reality of that thing changing? No, it's the same substance. It's being created by the same synthesis. It's the same laboratories that are putting out the same stuff. But something else is changing, and it doesn't work any more. According to the rules of science this is not possible. If those atoms have an innate ability to cure illness, then it should always work. And now, now you say, "No, but wait, wait, wait. It doesn't have to work any more because there's this other virus called AIDS, and then that's creating some kind of resistance, so actually the ability of the same stuff to do the same thing is being changed because of this other thing. So we're okay. Science is okay. It's not like, out of control, it's not like we can't control things. We can control things. It just went out of control for another reason."

Do you see what I mean? But then you're saying that science doesn't work any more. You see what I mean? Can you say that two years from now, penicillin will work like penicillin? You see? And if you can't, then you don't really

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understand what makes penicillin work. That's what I'm trying to say. Penicillin will work for a while, and after a while it will stop working, and everything that science does is the same way. It's very interesting. The reality of whether that thing works or not, and the reality of whether or not it makes human beings happier, does not exist in the atoms. It's coming from somewhere else. It's very interesting. It's really interesting. There is no objective reality to penicillin. That's not why penicillin works. You see? And the fact that it stopped working is proof of that. It's very interesting.

It's not that that atomic structure has some kind of reality to it that cures infection. That's not what makes penicillin work, and that's not what makes an airplane fly. You know? It's not a certain number of iron atoms, arranged in a certain way, with a certain velocity of oxygen and carbon atoms flying by it at a certain speed, is not what makes an airplane fly. Why? Airplanes fall down. And then your mind says, "I don't know what this guy's talking about. If airplanes are constructed properly, they always fly." Do you see what I mean? "And then when somebody screws up, like some mechanic doesn't screw the screw on tight enough, or somebody leaves a door open, or an electrical thing frays, then the thing falls down...but if it were always made properly, it would always work. So science is still okay."

But Buddhism says, and catch it, I'm not being facetious and I'm not using sophistry. I'm not using sophistry. Why did the guy not screw the thing on tight enough, and why did that wire fray when those particular people were in the plane? You know, I had two friends who got in a car accident when I was a kid. I was very, very disturbed, you know. I remember. I was living on Flynn Lane in Phoenix, Arizona, next to a palm grove, and two of my good friends got in a car accident. One of them died and one of them didn't die. And as I remember I asked my mom, you know, "Why did Russell die?" And she says, "He got in a car accident." And I said, "Well, Russell and" the other one—I think his name was Dennis—"Dennis were sitting in the front seat of the car, and the car hit some other car, and Russell died but Dennis didn't die. Why?" And my mom said "Well, Russell was sitting on the side of the car that got hit harder, you know, and so he hit his head." And I said, "But why was Russell sitting on that side of the car?" And then she said, "But there's no answer for that, you know? There's no answer for that."

And what you're saying is that, I mean I don't know how to say it, but there's a certain range of events here. It's like a ruler. Like, over here on the scale, around the one-inch mark, is the event called "Why him?" And then at around the two-inch mark there's "Why not Dennis, and why Russell?" And so reality is this big, you know, the world is this big, the events in my life go the length of the whole ruler. And you know, Russell died here. He died in this reality, in this range of events.

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And this part in the middle, say from the three-inch mark to the nine-inch mark, this is where you can explain it with your scientific worldview, you know. His head hit the windshield at a certain speed, so he died. This you can explain with science, you know. The human skull has so much resistance to crushing, and his was moving faster than that, so his skull was crushed and Dennis's wasn't. And that explains everything in here.

But my life goes to the whole extent of the ruler, all the way to the beginning of the one-inch part and all the way to the end of the twelve-inch part. There are events in my life out here on the ends that science doesn't explain, cannot explain. Why was Russell sitting on the left side and Dennis was sitting on the right side? You know, and they say, it's a stupid question—they answer you, "He got into the left side, and Dennis got into the right side." And then you get back to your Mom and you say, "Yeah, but why did Dennis get into the right side?" And she says, "Don't ask stupid questions, it's just the way it is."

And "just the way it is" is where science breaks down. Broke down totally. And you learned to live with it. You learned to cope with it. And you stopped asking, you know, you stopped asking your Mom 'cuz your Mom kept saying "stupid question," and your father kept saying "stupid question," and Mrs Melvin and Father Smith said "stupid question." Except Father Smith had this extra spiel about, "Oh, God wanted Russell quick, and Dennis is coming later." You know? And you're like, "Well, why did God want Russell quicker?" And it's like, "Don't ask that stuff."

And then you're looking at me and saying, "You know, you can't answer that stuff either, really." You don't believe I can. You really don't believe it. You really don't believe that the things outside those two lines, things towards the two ends of the ruler, are explainable. And that's where science breaks down. Science cannot...I mean, catch this: Is there a *tawa*, is there a belief system that's better than the American *tawa*? Is this something possible, in the way that science is better than voodoo—because it works better, it makes you happier, you know—but is it possible that there's an even better *tawa* than that, which explains the other things? Which explains everything? Which explains all the events on the ruler, all the events in the scope of my life, of my experience? Is there a *tawa* which is really complete? You see what I mean?

That's the big question. That's really the big question. Is there a *tawa*...I mean America would be a nice place for it to happen. I look forward to it. I believe it will happen in America. I believe that *tawa* will be replaced. We will reject that *tawa*. Why? It's the "flamethrower *tawa*." Why? It doesn't work all the way. It doesn't explain why Russell died. It doesn't explain why certain planes fall down. It doesn't explain why penicillin stopped working in 1997 for so many people. It doesn't explain those things. It really doesn't explain those things.

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I say science works some of the time, and doesn't make you happy—nearly all the time. Why? Well my biggest complaint about science, about that *tawa*, that worldview, is that it can't protect you from dying. And it doesn't protect you from most of the sufferings of life. It keeps you alive for a few more years, maybe, when it's in a good mood, you know, when penicillin is deciding to work, when the plane is deciding not to fall down. Which happens for other reasons anyway, right? But the *tawa* just doesn't work. I'm saying that the *tawa* which you call your American belief system, the worldview of western civilization itself, doesn't work. It just doesn't work. You should reject it.

And don't be shy just because a whole civilization holds this worldview. Don't think that three billion people can't be wrong, that they can't be totally wrong. There was a time when the entire western civilized world knew the earth was flat. There was a time earlier in the history of this country, there was a time when intelligent, thoughtful, educated people like our founding fathers, Jefferson, Washington, and the rest, were debating whether blacks were humans or animals. There is a time and a country now where many people say that animals don't have feelings, that they can't feel anything, and then these same people spend hundreds of millions of dollars to keep their pets happy, and slaughter millions of other animals mercilessly.

So don't be embarrassed to give up a worldview, the entire worldview of your civilization, if it's just flat, obviously, wrong. You should give it up. And there's a better one. There's a higher one, that works all the time.

What is this other *tawa*? It's the one I explained at the beginning. If it's true that the reality of this pen is coming from your mind, then all things are possible. You don't have to be satisfied with a world where there's only enough money for five percent of the people on the planet. That's a wrong view. In Buddhism that's a wrong view.

It's not true that there's only so much money and we have to share it better. Everybody could have enough money. Did you ever think of that? You see what I mean? Is it possible that everybody on the planet could have all the money they wanted? I mean, not according to any economic theory we have. People, and all the economic theories that this government is run by, that this country is run by, assume one thing: that there'll never be enough for everybody. Like, three percent unemployment's okay, four percent is okay. It's not like everybody could be employed in a job where they could be happy all day and do no work at all, okay? I mean, you don't even think of it...there's no economist advising Clinton this week who would propose such a thing. That just doesn't exist, and you don't believe it.



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And there's no scientist coming and writing in *Scientific American*, "We've discovered a way to make all people immortal; and, by the way, totally blissful all the time." And then you'd have other people saying, "That would be (a) boring and (b) impossible." You know, "Without misery you can't know happiness." And that's also a falsity. That's also bullshit. Of course you could be happy all the time. And of course everybody could have all the money they wanted all the time. And if the body can live for seventy years, why not forever? It's not coming from the atoms. You know, the fact that it's alive is not coming from the atoms. Why does it live? Who made that life? Where is life itself, awareness itself, coming from? It's not from some guy up there, I mean, we already showed that's crazy, that's already a crazy idea.

So your belief system is like...it's so hard to look at it because you grew up in it...it doesn't work. That's all I'm saying. It doesn't work. The belief system you have doesn't work. It doesn't function and it doesn't make you happy. So get rid of it.

And that's a pretty radical claim. Like you can't tell somebody, "Get rid of all your *tawa's*," unless you have something to replace it with. So what do you propose? The proposal's this: everything about your life is a transparency that you're overlaying on the raw data. If you had a plane that fell down, if your penicillin's stopped working, it's because your mind is seeing it as stopped working. It's not a physical reality that exists outside in the atoms of the penicillin. That's not why it stopped working. It stopped working because your mind has stopped seeing it working. Why? Because you did not protect the life of other beings in the past.

I mean, I was trying to imagine it this week. Imagine a country run by these principles, with this worldview. We'll start with roaches in your apartment, okay? Dear to my heart. You see roaches in your apartment. What would happiness be? Happiness would be to get rid of the roaches, right? Happiness would be if they just went away. So, what does science say? Kill them. Seriously. How? Spray some stuff on them, and they'll die. Does it work? No, it doesn't work. You know, they go away for a while, and then they come back, maybe worse. And then you spray more.

And then they say, "Unfortunately this pesticide doesn't work any more, we've found out that it kills all the people who use it. It gets into the water system, and also the bugs are becoming resistant to it." I mean, all the ads on the subway for bug poisons say, "Works every time." They have to say that because they *don't* work every time. You see what I mean? They say it works every time, because it doesn't work every time. They have to say that. They have to mention it because the other ones don't work every time. You know what I mean? And they come back. Why? Because killing them wasn't what got rid of them. You see what I mean? It's very interesting.

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How do you get rich? Do you invest? With risk, or with no risk? With risk, right? Like investing in things with risk is how you get rich. And this is called, I call it the "*Wall Street Journal* syndrome." Look on the first page of the *Wall Street Journal* tomorrow. The first page will have a very convincing story about some investor who risked all his money and made a lot of money. And then there'll be a story on the third page about a guy who did the same thing and destroyed his company, you know? And the guy on the first page is brilliant, and the guy on the third page is an idiot, and they did exactly the same things. And I swear to God, or whatever, the guy on the first page will be on the third page within a few years, you know?

And I've been in business, I've been in a company. We went from fifty-thousand dollars to one hundred and fifty million dollars a year. By the time we got in *Forbes* with a major article, we were already on our way down, but they were describing what a big success we were, you know? I mean, and we were risky, but then later risky became stupid. You see what I mean? And then the company went down. You see what I mean? And then other people were conservative, but they went out of business long before we did, except for the guys who were conservative who lasted longer than us, but they lost out to the guys who were risky longer than us. You know? But they were overcome by the guys who were conservative a little longer than that. And, I mean, face it, it's not either one of the above, right? That's not what's producing wealth.

What is producing money itself? What is producing wealth? What is making penicillin work? You see, there has to be some other answer. And, what would it be like to live in a United States that was run by these principles? I mean, what's your goal? What's your goal? Seriously. What would be the ultimate goal of any *tawwa*? We talked about it already. What do you want your *tawwa* to do? What do you want as the goal of your *tawwa*? You know, if this country was run perfect, and if every American citizen got everything they ever dreamed of, what would it be like in fifty years? First of all, tell me the result, you know? What do you dream of?

[Student: "*There would be no more suffering in the country.*"]

She said, "No suffering." Okay. Now, the normal American mind says, "Well, we can divide between the suffering you can do something about, and the suffering you can't do anything about." Okay? Seriously. The American mind says something about the distribution of wealth—like, there's the homeless people who sleep in this church here at night—and if we all just chipped in and gave them ten percent of our wealth, there wouldn't be anymore homeless people. But can you stop earthquakes in California, you know?

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Can you stop floods in Texas? You know? Can you prevent the tornadoes in Florida that make people homeless? Can you do that in this country? In fifty years, I'm saying, with advanced technology? Can you keep California from sliding off at the San Andreas fault? You know? (Sorry about all you L.A. people.) You would say, "No." You'd say, "That's not a reasonable goal." You know? Your *tawa* is restricted. Your *tawa* is limited, you know. Is it possible that there would not be a person in the whole country who suffered the least bit within fifty years? I mean, you don't even pretend to think that, right?

You think the best we could do is if we had a really smart mayor and a really compassionate people; and you would say, science is right, but science has to be used with compassion, you know? Harness atomic energy, and stop making bombs out of it, and try to use it for the good of people, right? Is that the best we can do? Is that what Buddhism is about? Is that the goal of Buddhism? I mean, could you, if you had really compassionate people doing science, could they remove the suffering in the United States with science? They couldn't.

So that *tawa* doesn't work, you see? Even the *tawa* that...even the view that science is okay if it were in the hands of good people, see what I mean? It would be nice to say, "If we were all acting like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and if we all used science, then the United States would be okay," but that's not true. Because science can't help the major sufferings in this country. There are the mental ones—depression, low self-esteem, alcoholism, drug abuse, and all the rest—and then AIDS, heart disease, cancer, breast cancer: all those things that cause the real suffering in this country. It doesn't matter if the scientists were compassionate or not, they haven't been able to fix them. That *tawa*, now catch this: that *tawa* doesn't work, science doesn't work. It can't get what you want your worldview to produce. It doesn't work.

So now you're faced with this question, "Is there a view that could work?" 'Cuz if there was you'd have to give up the flamethrower for cutting your fingernails, you know? Is there a view that works? Let's say, pretend, that this viewpoint works, the one I described at the beginning of class, *yang dakpay tawa*, the pure worldview. Why is it correct? That view says that this pen, which you've had three weeks of, this pen—it's getting boring right? You've had three weeks of this poor pen! That view says that this pen is a pen not because it's a pen from its side, but because my mind is organizing it into a pen. In fact, my mind is so good at organizing it into a pen that I can write with it, okay? My mind is so good at it, that it becomes reality. I can write with it.

That has profound implications, you see. I could also make this pen anything else, then. By wishing it? No. Prove it. I went to the dentist today. You

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could wish all day long, the drill feels the same. There's this smoke coming out of your mouth and this taste, you know? I don't know if you know this taste, of burning tooth stuff, whatever it is, you know, dentine? And they're nice dentists, but there's nothing they can do for you at that moment, you know? You can't do it from wishing it. These are planted by karma. What kind of karma? Good karma and bad karma. What makes good karma? Being compassionate to other people, taking care of other people.

So, catch this: what would this country be...I'm proposing something, I'm in the mood nowadays, you know? I'm proposing actually a shift in the entire belief system of the country, you know? Instead of, okay, what's the date today, someone has to mark it, it's historic, okay? Alright, Halloween night. It's appropriate. We threw out all the silly viewpoints, masquerading as reality, you know, masquerading as something useful. Especially the scientific one, okay? The God one went already. I mean, sooner or later people should get fed up with the science one. Why? It doesn't work. We still suffer. You know? It makes our lives like one percent easier. We still suffer. The cars we make to get us places, kill us. You know. The medicines we make to cure us, kill us. It doesn't work. You see? It makes your life slightly better. It doesn't cure your main problems. Okay?

What would happen if the whole country were run by Buddhist principles? What would happen if the whole country were run by *yang dakpay tawa*? It would be against the law to do a non-virtue. You see what I mean? Against who's law? Your own. You see what I mean? Each person would avoid hurting anybody, because you collect your own karma. You don't have to have a law. There wouldn't be a criminal court. Who punishes you? You do. Your karma does. Mr Karma comes and punishes you. I mean, it would be very interesting.

What would a workplace be like? What would a corporation be like? Corporations would be built to give away things that were useful to people, because the people who built those corporations would understand that that's the best way to get rich. You see what I mean? If this country were run along *yang dakpay tawa*, then GM and Ford and Kleenex Corporation, you know, they would be dying to do it, they would compete in the marketplace to take care of people. They would compete on who could convince people on TV to take their free product, rather than Chrysler's free product. You know? Because they recognize that that's the source of wealth. You see what I mean? In a self-interested, karmically self-enlightened—I mean, His Holiness calls it "enlightened self-interest"—the companies in this country, run by Buddhist principles, would be competing to give away their products, you see, and people of the country would be competing to give away their wealth to poor people. You see? And when you went to work, there'd be a rule: you have

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to do your tantric retreats twice a year. Must go, you know. If we catch you working, you'll be punished, you know. How? We won't take your donations anymore, you know?

No really, try to imagine it. There were these people called the Kadampas in Tibet. They were the first Buddhists in Tibet and they had this imagination. They said *mik gyang sing*. It means "try to picture it." If you can't picture it, it'll never happen. People in this room, people like us, you have to have that vision. When Buddhism came from Asia and hit American shores, you know...so you think there's never been an invasion of this country? Not true. When those Lamas snuck across the borders at JFK and brought those *tawa*'s, brought this *tawa*... What would it be like if this were a Buddhist country? What would it be like if people lived by Buddhist principles?

You wouldn't want to hurt anyone. You wouldn't need police. Everyone would give the other person the parking space first. You know? That's the most intelligent thing a Buddhist can do. You see what I mean? And the whole thing would change. The more parking places you give away, then what happens? The Federal government would fund the West Side Highway, finally. You see what I mean? I mean, if you kept giving away your parking spaces, there'd be enough for everybody. You see what I mean? The reason there are not enough parking spaces in New York City is that people trying to park have not been generous enough to other people trying to park. And it'll just get worse. I'm not joking. There will become more of a parking problem in New York City because people are so uncharitable with each other about parking spaces.

And I'll, I'll stop there, but think about it, okay? Think about it. There is a behavior by which there'd always be enough for everybody. And that is giving away to other people what you have, you know? It's not true that there's a limited amount of forests, and oil, and gold, and silver, and money on this planet. It's not true. That's not true. That limitation is created because we're not generous enough to other people.

And imagine what would happen, you see what I mean? Imagine what would happen if a whole culture shifted to understanding where wealth really comes from. Where does wealth really come from? Imagine if a whole two-hundred million people figured it out in the next fifty years. Give it a fifty year goal, okay Stilwell, where are you? Okay, Halloween night, 2000 and what...

*[student: Before we die!]*

We're not gonna die! Okay? Seriously, okay? No, you see, even death itself does not have to occur. Don't get used to thinking, "crappy samsara," okay? That's a lie. I mean, when samsara stops, it would be like that. You see?

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You have to imagine what it'd be like. You have to imagine what a Buddhafield would be like. It's not like a certain number of people are gonna leave the United States and go live somewhere else. It's not like that. If the collected population of the United States started to live by the laws of karma and emptiness, because they understood emptiness, they understood that this arm could become an angel's arm, then they would start to do the things they have to do to make this become an angel's arm, which is to take care of other people. And then I could have an angel's arm, you know; if I were concerned about other people, if I took care of other people, I wouldn't have to have an arm that's gonna be in a mortuary. You know what I mean? That's also a lie.

You know, the lie that we have to die, you know, and the idea that there's only enough wealth to go around for a few people, and we just need a good government to try to share it equally, is a lie. And the idea that there couldn't be all the parking places you need in New York City is a lie. You know? Because they're not self-existent. You don't make them self-existent. They are created by good deeds. A world where everybody had to die, or where there wasn't enough money for everyone, is a creation of your bad deeds. You see what I mean? And it's not self-existent, meaning—because of that transparency idea—you can change it. It can become a Buddha paradise, no problem.

There'll probably be a Manhattan Buddha paradise. It'll be up there with Tushita and Sukavati.

[Class laughs]

Seriously, why not? If you giggle, you're saying it's self-existent. You know, if you giggle you're saying it exists, if you giggle, you're saying it's crappy old Manhattan from it's side, and that this pen is not a chewable object. Seriously. If you accept the idea that this pen is a chewable object, validly, to a dog, you know; if you say this pen is equally a pen and equally a chewable thing, then you must accept that Manhattan can become a Buddha paradise. You know? You must accept it. That's why I started with the pen, you know? So, no problem. It's fantastic.

How do you do it? Understand the emptiness of it. Then you must learn the bodhisattva's behavior. You might want to study a book, called like, you know, *How To Be a Bodhisattva*, right? [The students in the class were just completing a one-year study of the entire book, and had reached the last great chapter, on worldview and emptiness.] In the last chapter the guy would nail it down, you know. He'd say, "Look, everything's empty. You keep the stuff I wrote up 'til now, anything is possible." You know? So that would become the constitution of your new country, right? The *Bodhisattva Charya Avatara*, you know, by Master Shantideva. Sounds good to me, right? No really, that's *tawa*, okay?

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And don't think that you don't have to throw away the old *tawa*'s. Those are wrong. Science and the rest, economic theories, whatever. They don't work, you know? They don't work any more than voodoo works. They don't work any more than the idea of some guy with a snake and his rib. They are just as primitive as that. They don't work, you know? They just don't work. And the other one does. Good deeds are infallible. It always works. Good karma always works, okay? That's all.

A few questions, and we'll go in five minutes, okay? No, okay, let's stop there. I think it's auspicious, okay. Go home with that *tawa*. Think about that *tawa*. If you have questions next time, bring them next time, okay? John, do we have class next Friday? I'm not sure. There is, okay. So go home, think about the idea of that *tawa*. Maybe next time we'll just talk about it, okay? So think about it for a week, and then come back and we'll just talk about it, okay. Think about if that *tawa* is possible, you know, and would it be reasonable to throw out the old American *tawa*, the old American view, and just replace it?

What is the old view? It's kind of this melting pot, right? America. It's five percent Judeo-Christian idea, eighty percent science, ten percent democracy theory, and ten percent economic theory, capitalist theory. We're a mish-mash of about...we're racially a mish-mash, linguistically we're a mish-mash, and *tawa*, our viewpoints are a mish-mash. And I propose that people like this group could start replacing it with the other *tawa*, which is based on emptiness and karma. Alright, we'll stop there.

*[mandala and dedication prayers]*

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**Your Old Bad Karma**

**Reading Four: The Power of Stopping**

**A Description of the Power of Stopping**

We will describe the next power, the power of stopping, first from *The Steps of the Teaching*, by Geshe Drolungpa.

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ཉེས་པ་ལས་སློབ་པའི་སློབས་ནི།

Here next is our description of power of stopping yourself from doing the bad deed again.

།གསུམ་པ་ཉེས་སློབ་མ་ལུས་སློམ་པ་ཡིས། །སྤར་སློབ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་ཟད་བྱེད་སློབས་  
བརྟེན་པའོ། །ཕྱིན་ཆད་སློམ་པ་དམ་དུ་འཇིན་པས་སློབས། །གསུམ་པོ་དག་ཀྱང་བརྟེན་  
པར་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ། །འདི་མེད་ན་ནི་བཤགས་པའང་ཚིག་ཙམ་རིང་པོར་ཟད་པའི་ཕྱིར།།

As for the third, the one where you  
Stop yourself from doing the bad deed,  
Suppose you've used the previous powers  
To end the karma; now you must use  
The three to restrain yourself firmly  
From doing such things in the future;  
For if this particular power is lacking, you may confess your wrong  
but all it is is empty words.



སའི་སྣོང་པོའི་མདོ་ལས་སློབ་གཙོད་པ་སློང་བ་ནི་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་མི་  
འཇིགས་པ་སྐྱེན་པ་སྟེ། །དག་བའི་ལས་དེས་སློན་གྱི་མཐའ་ནས་འཁོར་བའི་ཚུ་བོས་  
བྱེད་ཏེ་སློབ་གཙོད་པའི་ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིབ་པ་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་པའི་སྐྱིབ་པ་དང་ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྐྱིབ་  
པ་བྱས་པ་དང་བྱེད་དུ་བཅུག་པ་དང་རྗེས་སུ་ཡི་རང་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་འཇོམས་ཏེ་མ་ལུས་  
པར་ཟད་པར་བྱེད་དོ།།

As *The Sutra of Kshitigarbha* says,

To give up the act of taking life is to make the gift of freedom from fear to every living being. And this virtuous karma destroys all the obstacles from the act of killing that you've carried in your mind for the beginningless time that you've been swept along in the river of suffering life. These are the obstacles of the karma of killing, the obstacles of the mental afflictions, and the obstacles to seeing all objects: obstacles that have come from either committing killing yourself, or getting others to kill for you, or rejoicing in how others have killed. And in this way every one of these obstacles is finished.

དེ་ལ་རིགས་མཐུན་པའི་ལྷ་དང་མི་རྣམས་དགའ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ། །ནད་མེད་ཅིང་ཚོ་  
རིང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ལ་སོགས་པ་གསུངས་སོ།།

When you start acting this way, then all the gods and men who think the same way are pleased. You stop ever becoming sick, and your life becomes longer.

The sutra continues on in the same vein.

**Set a Do-able Goal**

It is unrealistic for most of us to say that we can stop ourselves from *ever* doing a certain negative action again. Here are two selections about setting goals for yourself that you can actually meet. The first is from *A Ritual for the Purifying Yourself of Bad Deeds*, by Je Tsongkapa.

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དེ་ནས་ཉེས་པ་ལས་སྒྲུབ་ལྡོག་པའི་སྣོབས་མེད་ན་བཤགས་པ་སྣོབས་རྒྱུད་བར་  
གསུངས་པས། ཉེས་པ་རྣམས་ཡིད་ལ་བྱས་ལ་འདི་དང་འདི་རྣམས་དེད་ནས་བཟུང་  
སྟེ་མི་བྱའོ་སྐྱམ་པའི་སྣོམ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པར་བྱ་སྟེ།

Now it is stated that, if you fail to complete the power of stopping yourself from doing the particular action in the future, then your purification will be of relatively little strength. To do this, try to bring up a state of mind where you decide to restrain yourself in the future: make a mental cataloging of your bad deeds, and decide that "From today I'll try to stop doing this one, or that one."

དུས་རིང་པོར་སྣོང་བྱུབ་པ་རྣམས་ལ་དུས་དེ་ཙམ་དུ་མི་བྱ་བའི་བསམ་པ་དང་། དུས་  
ཟུང་བ་ལས་མི་བྱུབ་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ཡང་ཀུན་ལ་ནས་མཇུག་པ་ལྟར་ཐ་ན་ཉེན་མཚན་རེ་  
རེར་ཡང་མི་བྱའོ་སྐྱམ་པའི་སྣོམ་སེམས་མང་དུ་བྱའོ།།

Those who have the capacity to keep themselves from committing a particular action for a relatively long time shouldn't put any mental time limit on their decision. Those though who know they won't be able to keep themselves from the action for more than a brief time should make a commitment like the one that Katyayana did; at a minimum, they should decide that they won't repeat the action for single days at a time—thus repeating the intention of restraining themselves over and over.

[The high being Katyayana, in a former life, worked as a butcher. He did not find himself capable of promising not to kill animals at all, but did agree not to kill them during the night—although he continued to kill them during the day.]

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Pabongka Rinpoche expresses this same sentiment, and enlarges upon it, in *The "Machine-Powered Wagon of the Supreme Way," being Instructions on How to Do the Six Preliminary Practices of the Steps on the Path to Enlightenment*:

གསུམ་པ་ཉེས་པ་ལས་སྒྲུབ་ལྡོག་པའི་སྣོབས་ནི། ད་ཕྱིན་ཆད་དེ་ལྟ་བུ་གཏན་ནས་མི་  
བྱེད་སྐྱམ་དུ་སྣོམ་སེམས་བྲག་པོ་བྱ་བ་ཡིན།

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The third of the four powers, the power of stopping yourself in the future, refers to a fierce resolution to restrain yourself in the future, where you say to yourself, "From this moment on I will never do a thing like that again."

སྡོང་མི་སྤྱབ་སྐྱམ་པ་ཞི་ལ་བཞག་ནས་སྡོང་པར་བགྱིའོ་ཞེས་སྐྱབ་ཅི་རྒྱལ་བ་སྐྱས་  
བཅས་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བསྐྱུས་པའི་ཉེས་པ་འབྱུང་བས། ཅུ་བ་ནས་སྡོང་སྤྱབ་པ་རྣམས་ལ་  
གཏན་ནས་མི་བགྱིད་སྐྱམ་པ་དང་། མི་སྤྱབ་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་། ལོ། ཟླ། ཞག་སོགས་  
འདི་ཅུ་སྡོང་སྐྱམ་པའི་སྡོང་སེམས་བསྟེན་པ་མན་ངག་ཡིན།

If you have some doubts about whether you would be able to keep it, then leave this kind of resolution, for you would incur the negative deed of lying to the Buddhas and their holy sons and daughters if you were then to say "I pledge to restrain forever." Do it instead this way. Decide that you will never again commit the bad deeds that you know you are capable of giving up completely. Even for the ones that you know you can't, then still try to feel some degree of desire to restrain yourself, by deciding that you will stop doing them for a year, or a month, or a day, or whatever. This is an oral advice of the lineage.

མ་མཐའ་སྡོང་སྤྱབ་པའི་སྡོན་ལམ་རྒྱན་བཏབ་ན་མཐར་སྡོང་སྤྱབ་པ་ཞིག་འབྱུང་  
གསུངས།

At the absolute least, if you can do no better, then make a prayer to yourself that you will be able to restrain yourself in the future, and some day be able to stop yourself from committing the action completely.

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**Practice VI: The Four Powers, How to Get Rid of**  
**Your Old Bad Karma**

**Reading Five: How the Four Powers Work, and Some Dessert**  
**from the Tantras**

The argument that we should do purification of our old bad deeds is much more compelling, especially for a westerner, if we have an understanding of the mechanics of how purification works—if we can logically see why the four powers do work in removing our old bad karma. So here we present a number of eloquent descriptions about how the powers do their job.

**How the Four Powers Stop Specific Karmic Results**

The first is from the Tibetan master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851), an important link in the lineage for the secret practice of the Angel of Diamond (Vajra Yogini). It is found in his *Response to a Question on the Expression "The World and All it Contains is Filled with Evil"*. This expression is found in the famed *Seven-Point Instruction on Developing the Good Heart*, and the question about it is asked by one of the master's students:

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མཆོད་ལགས། བཤམ་གསལ་ཡི་གོ་ནང་དེར་གསལ་ཏེན་ལི་ཚན་བཅས་འབྱོར་པ་ལྟར་  
འདོད་དོན་འགྲུབ་སྱིར་སླེ་མ་དགོན་མཚོག་ལ་གསོལ་འདེབས་གང་དྲག་ལྟ།

Honored One, we have received a communication with the following written contents; it begins with a fervent supplication to the Lama and the Three Jewels, and the hope to be granted the boon they request.

སློབ་སྦྱོང་ཙུ་བར་སྦྱོད་བཅུད་སྡིག་པས་གང་བའི་ཚོ། ཞེས་པར་སླེ་མཚོད་དུ། སྦྱོད་བཅུད་

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སྤྱི་གཤམ་འབྲས་བུ་སྡོམ་གང་སྟེ། ཞེས་ཅུང་ཟད་གསལ་དུ་སོང་བ་ལྟར།

In the root text of the instructions on developing the good heart it says "The world and all it contains is filled with evil..." This is only slightly clarified by that part in the *Offering to Lamas* where it says, "The world and all it contains is completely filled with the results of our past bad deeds." How are we to think of this?

སྤྱི་སྣོད་གྱི་འཇིག་རྟེན་སྤྱི་གཤམ་པ་མི་དགོ་བ་བཅུའི་བདག་པོའི་འབྲས་བུ་གང་བ་དང་།  
ནང་བཅུད་གྱི་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་སྤྱི་གཤམ་པ་མི་དགོ་བ་བཅུའི་རྒྱ་མཐུན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་  
སྡོམ་སྤྱི་གང་སྟེ། མི་འདོད་པའི་སྤྱི་གཤམ་བསྐྱེད་ཆར་ཆེན་པོ་ལྟར་བབས་པ་དེ་བྱང་རྒྱབ་  
གྱི་ལམ་དུ་བསྐྱར་བར་གསུངས་ཏེ།

The outer vessel, which refers to our physical world, is filled with what we call the "environmental" results of our past bad deeds, where we committed one of the ten non-virtuous acts. The inner contents of this vessel, meaning the beings who live in this world, are also completely filled with what we call the "similar" results of committing the ten bad deeds. These works then tell us that, when things happen to us that we would never want, when a rain of pain falls in our lives, we should try to transform it all into the path to enlightenment.

དེ་ལ་མི་དགོ་བ་བཅུའི་བདག་འབྲས་ནི། སྤོག་གཙོད་གྱིས་བཟའ་ལྷུང་དང་སྤྲོན་གྱི་རུས་  
པ་ཉམས། མ་བྱིན་ལེན་གྱིས་ལོ་འབྲས་ཉུང་དུ་ར་འགྱུར་ཞིང་སྤྲོན་མི་རུས། ལོག་  
གཡེམ་གྱིས་འདམ་རྒྱབ་དང་ལྷན་ལྷན་མང་བ་དང་ཡང་བ།

On this subject, let me give you a description of the environmental results of the ten non-virtuous deeds. If you have killed other beings, then you live in a world where food and medicine have very little potency. If you have stolen other people's things, then the crops in your land are deficient, and fail to ripen fully. If you have committed sexual misconduct, then the place where you live has areas like cesspools, places filled with filth and putrid smells.

རྒྱན་གྱིས་ལས་གྱི་མཐའ་རྒྱས་པར་མི་འགྱུར། སྤྲོན་མི་སྤོགས་མི་སྤོམས་ཤིང་

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བགོད་དཀའ། ཚིག་རྩུབ་ཀྱིས་སྤོང་དུ་མ་དང་ཚོར་མ་དང་དོ་གསེག་སོགས་མང་།  
ངག་བཀྲལ་གྱིས་སྒྲོན་ཤིང་ལ་འབྲས་བུ་དུས་སུ་མི་ཆགས།

The result of lying is that the your labors fail to have any extensive fruits. Divisive talk makes the land around you uneven and broken, and hard to travel over. Speaking harsh words causes the land to be littered with tree trunks, or thorns, or stones, clods, and the like. Useless talk prevents trees from giving their fruits at the proper time.

བརྒྱུ་བ་སེམས་ཀྱིས་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་རིམ་གྱིས་འགྲིབ། གཞོད་སེམས་  
ཀྱིས་འགོ་ནད་དང་འཁྲུག་པ་དང་དགྲ་གཞོན་གྱི་འཚོ་བ་མང་། ལོག་ལྟས་འབྱུང་  
ཁུངས་མཚོག་ལུབ་པ་དང་བཟང་ངན་གོ་ལྡོག་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དང་།

Unhappiness over others' successes and possessions gradually blocks us from every possible good thing that could come to us. Happiness over others' failures and troubles brings us a whole mass of harms—everything from infections diseases to unrest in the place we live, many enemies, and the appearance of harmful spirits. Wrong views of your world cause the ultimate source of happiness to disappear from your life, and a general view around you which has a totally upside-down opinion of which things are good, and which are bad.

རྒྱ་མཐུན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུའི་བྱེ་བྱག་སྤོང་བ་རྒྱ་མཐུན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་ནི། ལོག་གཞོད་ཀྱིས་ཚོ་  
སྤང་བ། མ་བྱིན་ལེན་གྱིས་ལོངས་སྤོད་དབུལ་བ། ལོག་གཤམ་གྱིས་རྒྱུང་མ་བསྐྱུང་  
མི་བརྟུབ་པ།

The karmic results we call "similar" can be divided into two types: the first is those which are a "similar experience." It is stated that killing shortens your life; stealing makes you poor; and sexual misconduct makes you unable to keep your spouse from others.

རྒྱུན་གྱིས་མི་ཁ་སྤང་བ། སྤོ་མས་མཇེའ་བཤེས་ཉུང་བ། ཚིག་རྩུབ་ཀྱིས་མི་སྦྲན་པ་  
མང་དུ་ཐོས་པ། ངག་བཀྲལ་གྱིས་ཚིག་མི་བཅོན་པ།

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Lying makes people talk bad about you; divisive talk causes you to have few friends; harsh speech forces you to hear many unpleasant things around you; and useless talk means that no one will respect what you have to say.

བརྒྱུ་མཐུན་གྱི་ཆགས་པ་ཤས་ཆེ་བ།      གཞོན་སེམས་གྱིས་ཞི་སྤང་ཤས་ཆེ་བ།  
ལོག་ལྟས་སྤོངས་པ་ཤས་ཆེ་བ་རྣམས་འབྱུང་བར་གསུངས་ཤིང་།

Unhappiness over others' successes and possessions causes you to have a personality dominated by desire. Happiness over others' failures gives you a personality dominated by anger. Wrong views about the world around you cause your personality to be dominated by stupidity.

བྱེད་པ་རྒྱ་མཐུན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་མི་དགོ་བ་གང་བྱས་པ་དེ་སྐྱེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་བྱེད་འདོད་  
པ་དང་།

The second kind of karmic result here, what we call "similar habit," means that in each of your future lives you will be attracted to doing the same kind of harmful deed.

རྣམ་སྐྱེན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་མི་དགོ་བཅུ་ཆེན་པོས་དམྱལ་བ།      འབྲིང་གིས་ཡི་དྲགས།      རྒྱང་  
དུས་དུད་འབྱོར་སྐྱེ་བར་གསུངས།

As for what we call the "rebirth result," it is stated that from committing very serious forms of the ten harmful acts you are born into the hell realms; from doing forms of medium seriousness you are born as a craving spirit; and from lesser forms you are born as an animal.

སྣོབས་བཞིའི་བཤགས་པ་བྱས་ན་ཉེན་གྱི་སྣོབས་གྱིས་བདག་འབྲས་དང་།      གཉེན་པོ་  
ཀུན་སྐྱོད་གྱི་སྣོབས་གྱིས་རྣམ་སྐྱེན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་དང་།      ལུས་འབྲིན་པའི་སྣོབས་གྱིས་  
སྤོང་བ་རྒྱ་མཐུན་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་དང་།      ལྷན་སྡོག་པའི་སྣོབས་གྱིས་བྱེད་པ་རྒྱ་མཐུན་གྱི་  
འབྲས་བུ་འདག་པར་གསུངས་སོ།།

It is, finally, stated that—when you do an act of purification using the four powers—the power of the foundation cleans you of the environmental result

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of your bad deed. The power of an antidote activity cleans you of the rebirth result. The power of destruction cleans you of the result of a similar experience, and the power of stopping cleans you of the result of a similar habit.

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Some similar detail is imparted by Pabongka Rinpoche in a work entitled *Just the Very Briefest Notes to Prevent Myself from Forgetting Certain Points Relating to the "Great Book on the Steps of the Path to Enlightenment, accompanied by the Annotations of Four Different Authors"*. The first line here is a quotation from *The Great Book* itself, and everything that comes after is an annotation:

ཕྱིར་བཅོས་པ་ནི་སྟོབས་བཞིས་བྱ་སྟེ།

The repair [after you've committed a bad deed] should be done with the four powers.

སྐྱོ་མཐའ་ཡས་པའི་གཟུངས་འགྲེལ་སྟོབ་དཔོན་ཡི་ཤེས་སྣང་པོས་མཛད་པ་ལས། དེ་  
ཡང་རྣམ་པ་བཞིས་ཡོངས་སུ་ཟད་པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། རྣམ་པར་སུན་འབྱེན་པ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྦྱོད་  
པ་དང་། གཉིན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྦྱོད་པ་དང་། སོར་ཚུད་པར་བྱེད་པའི་སྟོབས་དང་། རིན་  
གྱི་སྟོབས་ཏེ། དེ་སྐོད་དུ་ཚོས་བཞི་བསྟན་པའི་མདོ་ལས་འབྱུང་པའི་ཕྱིར་རོ།།

The following discussion is found master Yeshe Nyingpo's *Commentary on the Incantation of Infinite Means*:

This moreover is eliminated, completely, by the four powers. These are the power of the activity of destruction; the activity of an antidote; the power of restoring; and the power of the foundation. And this is true because that's how it's described in *The Sutra of the Instruction on the Four Practices*.

དེ་ལ་རྣམ་པར་སུན་འབྱེན་པ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྦྱོད་པས་ནི་ལས་གྱི་སྐྱིབ་པ་དེ་མཇུག་འཇོམས་  
པར་བྱེད་དོ།།

Of these, the activity of destruction functions to destroy the after-effect of a karmic obstacle.



གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྐྱོད་པས་ནི་དེ་རྣམ་པར་སློན་པར་བྱེད་པའི་མཐུ་ཉམས་སྐྱད་པར་བྱེད་  
དོ།

The activity of an antidote functions to ruin the ability of the karma to produce its karmic result.

སོར་ཚུད་པར་བྱེད་པའི་སློབས་ཀྱིས་ནི་དེ་རྣམ་པར་སློན་པར་བྱེད་པའི་མཐུ་སེལ་བར་  
བྱེད་དོ།།

The power of restoration [which is in later times referred to as the "power of stopping"] functions to eliminate entirely the ability of the karma to produce its karmic result.

རྟེན་གྱི་སློབས་ཀྱིས་ནི། ལྷན་བྱུང་བ་ནི་རྒྱང་བསྐྱིད་བར་བྱེད་ལ། ལྷན་མ་བྱུང་བ་ནི་མི་  
སྐྱེ་བར་བྱེད་དོ།།

The power of the foundation functions to put far off what has already occurred, and to prevent what hasn't yet occurred.

དེ་ལྟ་བུས་ན་རྣམ་པ་དེ་དག་གིས་ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱབ་པ་བྱས་ཤིང་བསགས་པ་ཡང་མ་ལུས་  
པར་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ནི་རིགས་པ་ཡིན་ནོ། །ཞེས་སོ།

Thus it is correct when [*The Diamond Cutter*] says that these forms of practice can clean you of every karmic obstacle, even those which are committed and collected.

### Resolving Some Sticky Issues about Purification

There are a number of classic "sticky issues" about the concept of purification that appear throughout Buddhist literature over the centuries. Here is a brief presentation of some of the major issues which clarifies them briefly but fully; all the more an amazing feat since the author has done so in eloquent poetry. This selection is taken from "*An Easy Path to Omniscience, being Advice, Set in Verses, on the Steps of the Path to Enlightenment*," which was written by a former life of Pabongka Rinpoche: the first Changkya Rinpoche, Ngawang Lobsang Chunden (1642-1714).

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།བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྤྱོད་འཇུག་ལས།  
།སྡིག་པ་ལྷན་ཏུ་མི་བཟད་བྱས་ན་ཡང་།  
།དཔའ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་འཇིགས་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ལྟར།  
།གང་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ཡུད་ཀྱིས་གྲོལ་འགྱུར་བ།  
།དེ་ལ་བག་ཅན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཅིས་མི་བརྟེན།  
།དེས་ནི་དུས་མཐའི་མེ་བཞིན་སྡིག་ཆེན་རྣམས།  
།སྐད་ཅིག་གཅིག་གིས་ངེས་པར་སྡིག་པར་བྱེད།

Remember *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* where it says,  
Suppose that you have even committed  
The most unbearable wrong; still there's something  
That can free you from it in a second,  
Like depending upon a mighty warrior  
To save you from some terror—why then  
Wouldn't thoughtful people depend on it?  
The power of this thing is like the fire  
That ends the world, for it obliterates  
Great bad karma surely, in a moment.

།ཞེས་པ་ལྟར་རོ་སྟོབས་བཞིས་སྐྱེངས་པ་ཡིས།  
།སྡིག་པ་འདག་ལུགས་ངན་འགྲོར་སྐྱག་བསྐྱེལ་བ།  
།ཆེན་པོ་སྤྱོད་པའི་རྒྱ་རྣམས་རྒྱུ་ཏུ་ཅོམ།  
།སྤྱོད་པའི་རྒྱ་ཏུ་འགྱུར་པའམ་ངན་འགྲོ་ཏུ།  
།སྐྱེས་ཀྱང་དེ་ཡི་སྐྱག་བསྐྱེལ་མི་མྱོང་པའམ།  
།ད་ལྟའི་རྟེན་ལ་མགོ་བོ་ན་བ་ཅོམ།

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།བྱུང་བས་དག་ནས་འགྲོ་དང་རྒྱན་རིང་པོར།  
།སྲོང་དགོས་རྣམས་ནི་ཐུང་དུ་འཕ་གཏན་མི་སྲོང་།  
།ལ་སོགས་ཅི་དུགས་པར་ནི་འགྲུང་བ་སྟེ།

Suppose, as it says, you've used the four powers  
To clean from yourself some bad deed; the way  
This works is that causes for vicious pain  
In the lower realms become instead  
Causes for only lesser pains; and even  
If you take a birth within these realms  
You either don't feel the pain that's there,  
Or in your current body you get  
No more than simple headache, and then  
The power is finished. So too the ones  
You must endure for some long time  
Get shorter, or never occur at all.  
These or something similar are how  
It works, depending on circumstances.

།དེ་ཡང་སྲོང་སྟོབས་ཆེ་ཚུང་གཉེན་པོ་ཡི།  
།སྟོབས་བཞི་ཚུགས་དང་མ་ཚུགས་ཤུགས་དྲག་ཞན།  
།སྲོང་ཡུན་རིང་ཐུང་སོགས་ཀྱིས་ཡིན་པས་ན།  
།བདག་པའི་ཚུལ་ནི་གཅིག་ཏུ་མ་ངེས་སོ།

The strength of the purification you do,  
How well it actually works, is something  
That's variable, because it depends  
On whether all four of the powers  
Are present or not; on whether you do them  
Sincerely or not; and upon how long  
You continue your purification practice.

།གཞན་ཡང་ལས་རྣམས་བསྐྱལ་བ་བརྒྱུར་ཡང་རྒྱད་མི་ཟ།  
།ཞེས་པ་སྟོབས་བཞིའི་གཉེན་པོ་མེད་ལ་དགོངས།

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Now scripture does state that "The power of karma  
Will never just go away, even after  
A hundred eons have passed."  
This statement though was meant to refer  
To cases where the antidote  
Of the four powers hasn't been applied.

།ངེས་པར་སློང་བར་གསུངས་པའང་དེ་དང་འདྲ།  
།མ་ངེས་པ་ནི་གཉིན་པོ་མ་བསྐྱོམ་ཀྱང་།  
།འབྲས་བུ་འབྱིན་པའི་ངེས་པ་མེད་པ་ལ།  
།བྱེད་པ་ཡིན་པར་བརྒྱད་སྟོང་འབྲེལ་ཆེན་དུ།  
།གསུངས་ཤིང་བཤགས་པས་རྣམ་སྐྱིན་འབྱིན་པ་ཡི།  
།རྣམ་པ་ཉམས་པར་བྱས་རྣམས་རྐྱེན་གཞན་དང་།  
།འཕྲད་ཀྱང་རྣམ་སྐྱིན་འབྱིན་པར་མི་འགྱུར་ལ།

Statements that certain karmas are certain  
To produce an experience were meant the same.  
When we say that some are not certain we mean  
That it's unsure that they will give a result,  
Even before an antidote practice.  
This is clarified within the great  
Commentary to *The Eight Thousand*;  
Purification functions to ruin  
The power of the karma to give  
Its karmic result; and then even if  
These seeds encounter conditions to grow  
They never produce their result.

།དེ་བཞིན་ལོག་ལྟ་སྐྱེས་དང་ཁོང་ཁྲོ་ཡིས།  
།དགོ་རྩ་བཅོམ་པའང་འབྲས་བུ་མི་འབྱིན་པ།  
།གཉིས་པོ་འདྲ་བར་རྟོག་གི་འབར་གསུངས།

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There's a similar case when you develop  
Wrong views of your world, or feel some anger;  
It destroys the good karma that you've collected,  
And stops it from producing the result it should.  
It's stated in *The Blaze of Reasoning*  
That these two cases are alike.

།གལ་ཏེ་སྲོང་ངེས་ལས་ཀྱང་འདག་འགྱུར་ན།  
།ལས་ཀྱི་ནམ་པར་སླིན་པ་མ་གཏོགས་སོ།  
།ཞེས་པ་མདོ་ལས་གསུངས་པ་ཇི་སྟེ་སྟམ་ན།  
།དམུས་ཡོང་མིག་གཅིག་ཞེ་འབྲེང་འོན་ཏེ་སྐྱབ་སོགས།  
།ལས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་ནམ་པར་སླིན་ཟིན་པ།  
།བཤགས་པ་སོགས་ཀྱིས་བརྗོད་ཏེ་མེད་ལ་དགོངས།

Now next you might wonder to yourself  
About the statement from sutra that says,  
"It may be true that you can clean  
Yourself of even certain karma,  
But the karmic ripenings of seeds  
Are a case which is excepted."  
This particular statement's intended  
To refer to results of karma  
That have already ripened forth:  
To infirmities like blindness or losing  
An eye, walking with a limp,  
Deafness, or dumbness, and all the like.

།གལ་ཏེ་ལས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་མ་ལྟར་ག།  
།ཚུལ་བཞིན་བཤགས་པས་ཡོངས་སུ་ཟད་འགྱུར་ན།  
།མ་སྐྱེས་དབང་དང་བདེ་བྱེད་ལྟ་བུ་ནི།  
།མནར་མེད་པ་སུ་སྐྱེས་པ་ཅི་ཞེས་ན།

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Next you might ask the following question:  
"You've said that if a result of a deed  
Has not yet appeared and you succeed  
In a proper purification then  
It's entirely finished off.  
Why is it then that the likes of Ajata  
Shatru and the one named "Happiness"  
Were born in the Hell of Unceasing Torment?"

ལས་འབྲས་ལ་ནི་ཡིད་ཆེས་སྐྱོད་པའི་ཕྱིར།  
མཚན་མེད་སོགས་སུ་སྐྱེ་བ་བསྐྱེན་པ་ཅམ།  
ཡིན་གྱི་ལས་རྣམས་མ་ཟད་པ་མིན་ཏེ།  
དར་གྱི་ཕོ་ལོང་བདབ་ལས་འཕར་བ་བཞིན།  
དེར་ནི་སྐྱེས་ཀྱང་དམུལ་བའི་མེ་སོགས་ཀྱིས།  
རིག་པ་མེད་པར་དེ་ལས་ཐར་བའི་ཕྱིར།

Lord Buddha taught that they were born  
In Unceasing Torment and the like  
Only to help us develop belief  
In karma and consequence.  
It's not though that they didn't finish  
The power of their karma;  
They were born there like a bouncing ball,  
Hitting and rebounding,  
Freed from the hells untouched  
By the fires and the rest.

དེས་ན་སྒྲིག་པ་རྩ་ད་ནས་འབྲིན་པར་ཡང་།  
གྲུབ་ཅིང་ལས་ལ་འབྲས་བུ་མེད་པ་ཡང་།  
མིན་པར་གྲུབ་ཅིས་རྟོག་གི་འབར་བར་བཤད།

Thus it is that, nonetheless,  
The fact that negative deeds are ripped  
From the root is proven; and this is why

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*The Blaze of Reasoning* describes the results  
As "not being results," rather than saying  
"The results don't exist" at all.

འབྲུག་པས་སློབ་པ་ལྷག་མེད་དག་པ་དང་།  
དང་པོ་ཉིད་ནས་མ་གོས་པ་གཉིས་ནི།  
ཁྱད་པར་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཆེ་སྟེ་བྱང་མེས་ཀྱི།  
ཚུ་ལྟངས་བྱང་བས་བྱང་སྟོམ་སྐྱར་བྱངས་པས།  
འཚོས་པར་རྣམ་ཀྱང་ཚེ་དེར་ས་དང་པོ།  
ཐོབ་མི་སྲིད་ཅེས་བྱང་མེས་གསུངས་པ་དང་།

There is a tremendous difference though  
Between using the practice of purification  
To clean yourself of every bit  
Of a karma and not besmirching yourself  
With a bad deed in the first place:  
Remember where it says in the text  
Of the *Bodhisattva Levels*  
That if you've broken one of the root  
Vows of a bodhisattva you can't  
Ever achieve the first bodhisattva  
Level within this life,  
Despite the fact that you can restore  
Your bodhisattva vows  
By taking them once again.

སློབ་གྲོགས་དབང་གིས་དམ་ཚཱ་སྟོངས་པའི་ལས།  
འབྲིས་པ་དེས་ནི་འགྲོད་པས་ལོ་བདུན་གྱི།  
འབར་དུ་ཉིན་རེར་དུས་གསུམ་ཉིས་པ་ལ།  
ཉིས་པར་ཤེས་ནས་བཞགས་ན་བྱང་འགྱུར་ཏེ།

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And suppose that because of the influence of  
A negative friend you commit the deed  
Of giving up the holy Dharma;  
And suppose too that for the length of seven  
Years you go every day and make  
Some purification where you go  
Every day and three times admit the error,  
Saying "I see the mistake was wrong."

།དེ་ནས་ཚུམ་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་སྐྱར་ན་ཡང་།  
།བཟོད་པ་ཐོབ་ལ་བསྐྱལ་བ་བཅུ་དགོས་པར།  
།རྣམ་པར་འབྲུག་པ་བསྐྱུས་པའི་མདོ་ལས་གསུངས།  
།དེས་ན་འབྲས་བུ་ཡིད་མི་འོང་འབྲིན་པ།  
།མ་ལུས་འདག་ཀྱང་ཉོག་པ་སྐྱེ་བ་སོགས།  
།ཆེས་ཆེར་རིང་དུ་འགོ་བས་དང་པོ་ནས།  
།ཉེས་པས་མ་གོས་པ་ལ་འབད་པར་བྱ།

It's stated in *The Briefer Version*  
*Of the Sutra of Smashing to Dust*  
That even if you follow this practice  
The very fastest that you could achieve  
The level of mastery would amount  
To a total of ten more eons.  
Therefore even though it's true  
That you can clean away the karma  
So it won't give even a single one  
Of its undesirable results,  
It still delays you for a very long time  
From reaching realizations,  
And so it's better to make great efforts  
Not to dirty yourself  
With bad deeds in the first place.

།དཔེར་ན་རྣང་ལག་བསྐྱུང་བ་བཅོས་རུང་ཡང་།



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།སྒྲུང་ནས་མ་བསྐྱད་པ་དང་མི་འདྲ་བས།

།གཏན་ནས་མ་བསྐྱད་པ་ལ་བརྩོན་དགོས་བཞིན།

Think for example of a leg or an arm;  
It's true you can fix them if you happen  
To hurt them seriously,  
But you know they never work as well  
As they did before you hurt them.  
It's better then if you work hard to stop  
Yourself from hurting them  
In the first place; and here it's the same.

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One of the points mentioned above is clarified by the great textbook writer from Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery, Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye (1493-1568), in his *Dialectic Analysis of the Perfection of Wisdom*. The presentation takes the form of a debate:

ཁ་ཅིག་ན་རེ། ངན་འགྲོའི་རྣམ་སྤྲིན་གྱི་ཕུང་པོ་འཕེན་བྱེད་གྱི་སྤྱོད་ངེས་གྱི་ལས་ཡིན་ན།

རང་ཉིད་གྱིས་འཕངས་པའི་རྣམ་སྤྲིན་གྱི་ཕུང་པོ་ཡོད་པས་ཁྱབ་ཟེར་ན།

Suppose someone comes and makes the following argument:

If something is a case of that karma which is certain to produce a result—that is, which is certain to project forth, as its karmic result, the various parts of a being in the lower realms—then there must come to be those very parts of a person which it projects as its karmic result.

ངན་འགྲོའི་རྣམ་སྤྲིན་གྱི་ཕུང་པོ་འཕེན་བྱེད་གྱི་སྤྱོད་ངེས་གྱི་ལས་དང་།      གཉིན་པོ་

སྤྱོད་ས་བཞིས་འདགས་ངེས་གྱི་ལས་གྱི་གཞི་མཐུན་ཚེས་ཅན།

In answer we say:

Consider then one thing which is both (1) a karma which is of the kind which is certain to produce, as its karmic result, the various parts of a being in the lower realms; and (2) a karma which is certain to be cleaned away through the use of the four powers.

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དེ་ཐལ་དེའི་ཕྱིར་ཏེ། ཚེས་ཅན་དེ་ཡིན་པའི་ཕྱིར་ཏེ།

Are you saying that [there must come to be such a result]?

Because it is [a case of that karma which is certain to produce a result].

And that's true because the example is the one we just gave.

དེ་ཡོད་པའི་ཕྱིར་ཏེ། ཤེར་ཕྱིན་ལ་སློང་པའི་གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སློང་པའི་སྣོབས་ཀྱིས་  
སློང་ངེས་ཀྱི་ལས་ཀྱང་འདགས་པར་གསུངས་པའི་ཕྱིར། རྟོག་གི་འབར་བ་ལས།  
དཔྱལ་བར་སྐྱེ་བའི་ལས་རྣམས་ནི་ཚེ་འདིར་མགོ་བོ་ཚ་བ་ཙམ་དུ་འགྱུར་རོ། །ཞེས་  
གསུངས་པའི་ཕྱིར།

And there does really exist just such an example, because the books on the perfection of wisdom state that even karma which is certain to give a result can be removed by using the power of an activity which is an antidote for the original action. As *The Blaze of Reasoning* says, "The karmic power that would have otherwise caused you a birth in the hells becomes no more than a simple headache here in this life."

འདོད་མི་རུས་ཏེ། ཚེས་ཅན་དེ་ཡིན་པའི་ཕྱིར།

[And suppose the opponent retorts with: "Then I agree [to your original statement: it is true that there *must* come to be such a result]."

We then return with:

But you can't agree, for there is the case that we have cited.

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Some of the details found above in the text by the first Changkya Rinpoche (a former life of Pabongka Rinpoche) are summarized by Pabongka Rinpoche in his text entitled *The "Machine-Powered Wagon of the Supreme Way," being Instructions on How to Do the Six Preliminary Practices of the Steps on the Path to Enlightenment*. Note that he adds an additional factor that can determine whether full purification takes place.

བདག་ཚུལ་ཡང་འབྲས་བུ་ཅུང་ཟད་ཀྱང་སྤོང་མི་དགོས་པར་བདག་པ་དང་། ཚུ་བ་  
ནས་མ་འདག་ཀྱང་ངན་སོང་གི་སྐྱུ་བ་སྐྱུ་ལ་ཆེན་པོ་རྣམས་ཚུང་དུར་འགྱུར་བ། ངན་  
འགོ་སྤོང་བའི་ལས་ད་ལྟའི་ཉེན་ལ་མགོ་བོ་ན་བ་ཅམ་གྱིས་བདག་པ་དང་། དུས་ཡུན་  
རིང་པོར་སྤོང་དགོས་དུས་སྤང་དུས་འདག་པ་སོགས་དག་ཚུལ་མི་འདྲ་བ་ཅི་རིགས་  
འབྱུང་།

As for just how the purification takes place, a number of possibilities exist. Sometimes the purification is so successful that you experience not even the least result of the karma. Sometimes you fail to eliminate the karma from its root; but still some great sufferings that you would have had to undergo in the lower realms become instead very minor pains there. Sometimes a karma that would have been experienced as a rebirth in the lower realms is cleaned in such a way that you experience no more than a headache in your current body and mind. And sometimes a result that you would have had to experience for a very long time becomes something finished in a very brief period. Each of these can occur, according to the appropriate conditions.

དེ་ཡང་སྤོང་མཁན་སྣོབས་ཆེ་ཚུང་དང་། གཉེན་པོ་སྣོབས་བཞི་ཚློགས་མ་ཚློགས་དང་།  
ཤུགས་དྲག་མི་དྲག་དང་། ཡུན་རིང་སྤང་ལ་སོགས་པའི་དབང་གིས་ཡིན་པས་མཐའ་  
གཅིག་ཏུ་ངེས་པ་མེད་དོ།

These conditions include the relative spiritual power of the person doing the purification; whether or not all four powers are present; how sincerely the purification is performed; how long you keep up the process of purification; and so on: these mean that how well the purification succeeds is not something that is absolutely fixed.

དེས་ན་དུས་ཡུན་རིང་པོར་སྣོབས་ཤུགས་དྲག་པོས་སྣོབས་བཞི་ཚང་བའི་ཤུགས་སྣོམ་ལ་  
བརྩོན་པ་ནན་ཏན་འབད་པར་བྱའོ།

Given that this is the case, you must take special care to make great efforts in a dual practice of confession and restraint, with all four powers present, sincerely—and over an extended period of time.

### The Classic Presentation from *The Blaze of Reasoning*

We have seen the classic Indian presentation on the four powers and their effects—*The Blaze of Reasoning*—mentioned now a great number of times. We here include a large portion from this work, in order to complete and reinforce our understanding of the principles of purification through the four powers. The full name of the work, by Acharya Bhavya (490-570), is *The Blaze of Reasoning, a Commentary on "The Heart of the Middle Way."*

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སྲིག་པ་ལོན་ཏུ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡང་རྩ་བ་ནས་འབྱིན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཡང་མི་རིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།  
འདི་ལྟ་བུ་ལས་རྣམས་བསྐྱལ་བ་བརྒྱུར་ཡང་ནི།      །ཚུད་མི་ཟ་བའང་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་  
བསྐྱལ་བ་བརྒྱུར་ཡང་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་དང་། གང་གི་སྐྱ་གཉིས་པས་ནི་ཉམས་པར་འགྱུར་བ་  
ཡང་སྣོན་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ། གང་གིས་ལེན།

Nor is it incorrect to say that "Even extremely serious bad deeds can be ripped from their very roots," and here's why. Suppose someone comes and asks,

Scripture says that "karma doesn't just go away, even in hundreds of eons." And so there is a statement about "hundreds of eons," and there is a statement expressed with the second "which" which indicates that karma *will* be ruined. Why is this?

སྲོམ་པར་བྱེད་པ་དང་། གཉེན་པོའི་ཕྱོགས་རྙིང་པ་དང་། སྲིག་པ་བཤགས་པ་དང་།  
ཉེན་གྱི་སྣོབས་ཀྱིས་རབ་ཏུ་འབྲོབ་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཇི་སྐད་དུ།

This "ruining" of karma is something that is accomplished, perfectly, by restraining oneself; by bringing about what acts as an antidote to the karma; by performing acts of purification for one's past deeds; and through the power of the foundation. We find this fact expressed in the following statement from sutra:

བྱམས་པ་ཚོས་བཞི་དང་ལྔ་ནི་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོས་ནི་

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སྤྲིག་པ་བྱས་ཤིང་བསགས་པ་ཡང་ཟིལ་གྱིས་གཞོན་པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། བཞི་གང་ཞེ་ན།

O Loving One, if a great bodhisattva keeps four practices, then he or she can never be overwhelmed by bad deeds that they have both committed and collected. And what are these four practices?

འདི་ལྟ་སྟེ། རྣམ་པར་སྲུན་འབྱིན་པ་ཀུན་སྦྱོང་པ་ནི། མི་དགོ་བའི་ལས་གང་བྱས་པ་དེ་  
ལ་འགྲོད་པ་རབ་རྟུ་མང་བ་ཡིན་ལོ། །གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་དུ་སྦྱོང་པ་ནི་མི་དགོ་བའི་ལས་  
གང་བྱས་པ་དེ་དག་ཆེས་ཤིན་རྟུ་མང་བའི་དགོ་བའི་ལས་ལ་སྦྱོར་བའོ། །ཕྱིར་མི་ལྷོག་  
པའི་སྣོབས་ནི་སྣོམ་བ་སྐྱངས་པས་མི་བྱེད་པའི་སྣོམ་པ་ཐོབ་པའོ། །

The "activity of destruction" refers to having many regrets about a negative deed that you have committed. The "activity of an antidote" refers to applying yourself to massive and numerous good deeds relating to whatever negative action you have performed. The "power of never turning back" means taking and obtaining a commitment not to commit the action again.

རྟེན་གྱི་སྣོབས་གྱིས་ནི་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་། ཚེས་དང་། དགོ་འདུན་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་འགོ་  
ཞིང་བྱང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སེམས་མི་འདོར་བ་སྟེ། ཚེས་བཞི་པོ་འདི་རྣམས་དང་ལྷན་པའི་བྱང་  
རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའ་ནི་སྤྲིག་པ་ལྷག་མ་མ་ལུས་པར་བྲལ་བར་འགྱུར་ཞིང་འབྲས་བུ་  
འགྲུང་བར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ་ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ། །

The "power of the foundation" means never giving up the act of taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Community; and never giving up the wish for enlightenment. Any bodhiattva who maintains these kinds of power is freed from every remaining bit of the bad deed they did; and the result of this deed can never come to them.

ལས་གྱི་སྦྱོབ་པ་རྣམ་པར་དག་པའི་མདོ་ལས། ཚོགས་དང་དུས་ནི་རྟེན་གྱུར་ནས།  
ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ནི་ཇི་ལྟར་ས་བོན་མཐུ་མ་ཉམས་པ་དང་ལྷན་པ་ལ་ས་དང་། རྒྱ་དང་། མི་

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དང་། རླུང་དང་། རྣམ་མཁའའི་རྒྱུན་རྣམས་ཚོགས་ན་དུས་ཇི་ལྟ་བ་བཞིན་དུ་སྐྱུ་གུ་  
མངོན་པར་སྐྱབ་པར་བྱེད་དོ།།

*The Sutra on the Complete Purification of Every Karmic Obstacle* includes that line about "If there comes a situation where they all assemble, and the the time is ripe..." The point here is that a sprout will be produced at such time as the following are complete: a seed whose power has not been ruined, and the contributing factors of earth, water, heat, air, and space.

རྒྱུན་ཉི་བར་གནས་སུ་ཟེན་ཀྱང་ས་བོན་ཚིག་གམ་རུལ་ལམ་སྐྱད་པ་ལས་ཀྱང་མ་ཡིན་  
ལ། རྒྱུན་གང་ཡང་རུང་བ་ཞིག་མ་ཚང་བ་ན་སྐྱུ་གུ་མངོན་པར་འབྱུང་བར་འགྱུར་བ་མ་  
ཡིན་ནོ།།

If though the seed has been scorched, or if it has rotted or is otherwise damaged, then even should the various contributing factors be at hand then this production cannot occur. Nor can the production of the sprout occur if any one of the contributing factors is missing.

དེ་བཞིན་དུ་དགོ་བ་དང་། མི་དགོ་བའི་ལས་མཐུ་མ་ཉམས་པ་དང་། ཕན་པ་བྱེད་པ་  
དང་། གནོད་པ་བྱེད་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་འགོ་བ་དང་། ཡུལ་དང་། ལུས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུན་རྣམས་  
མཐོང་བའི་ཚོས་དང་། རྣམ་གངས་གཞན་དང་། རྐྱེས་ནས་ལྷོང་བར་ངེས་པའི་  
དུས་ཐོབ་པར་གྱུར་ན་གང་ཡང་རུང་བ་ཞིག་གི་འབྲས་བུ་མངོན་པར་སྐྱབ་པར་བྱེད་ཀྱི།

Karma works the same. Suppose that the power of a particular good karma or bad karma has not been ruined; and suppose that the karma has come into contact with the various contributing factors, such as the different types of being who are either to do some help or some harm; the necessary place; and the necessary type of body. If the time is ripe then for some definite experience—that is, for the karma to be experienced as something you see in this very life; as something you experience in the life subsequent to your next life or beyond; or as something in your very next life—that some one of these results will be produced.

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གང་གི་ཚེ་དགོ་བ་ཡང་ལྟ་བུ་ལོག་པ་དང་། གཞོན་སེམས་ཀྱིས་ཉམས་པར་གྱུར་  
བའམ་མི་དགོ་བ་ཡང་དམེད་པ་དང་། ལྷོ་མ་པ་དང་། འཆགས་པ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་  
གཉེན་པོས་སློབས་ཉམས་པར་གྱུར་པ་དེ་དག་ནི་རྒྱུ་ཚོགས་པ་ཡོང་དུ་ཟེན་ཀྱང་དགོ་  
བ་དང་། མི་དགོ་བའི་ས་བོན་གྱི་རྣམས་པ་ཉམས་པ་གང་ལས་འབྲས་བུ་གང་ཞིག་འབྱུང་  
བར་འགྱུར།

Suppose though there comes a point that a particular virtuous karma has been ruined because one has developed wrong views, or thoughts of malice; or else that the power of a particular non-virtuous karma has been ruined by applying an antidote, such as repudiating the act; or deciding to restrain oneself; or by confessing what's been done. The contributing factors in either case may have assembled together fully; but where could any result come from any seed—of either the good deed or the bad—where its power had already been ruined?

རྒྱུ་ཚོགས་པ་མེད་པས་དུས་གང་གཞན་དུ་གྱུར་ན། ཇི་ལྟར་ན་རྩ་བ་ནས་ཤིན་ཏུ་  
འབྱེན་པ་ཡང་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཇི་སྐད་དུ་དམ་པའི་ཚོས་འཇིན་པར་བྱེད་པ་དེའི་སྐྱོང་བར་  
ངས་པའི་སྲིག་པ་ཡང་མཐོང་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་སྐྱོང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་དང་།

One may come with yet another question:

I can see how, if the contributing factors failed to come together, then the result would have to be pushed off to some different time; but in this case it wouldn't be, as you've described it, that the "root of the karma has been ripped out entirely."

Besides this, we see a number of other references from scripture that contradict your view. First there is the explanation that even those bad deeds which are certain to produce an experience later can turn into an experience which is seen in this very life, for those who are maintaining a good practice of the holy Dharma.

གཞན་ཡང་། གང་དག་ངན་འགྲོར་འགྲོ་བའི་ལས་རྣམས་དེ། །འདིར་ནི་མགོ་བོ་ཚོ་

བ་ཚམ་དུ་འགྱུར། །ཞེས་ཀྱང་འབྱུང་ངོ། །གལ་ཏེ་མགོ་བོ་ཚ་བ་ཚམ་དུ་འགྱུར་བའི་  
འབྲས་བུ་ཡོད་ན་རྩ་བ་ནས་སྤུང་བ་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡིན་ཞེ་ན།

We also see the statement in scripture that "Karma which would have taken one to a rebirth in the lower realms / Turns instead to no more than a headache, here in this life." How can you say then that a particular karma has been "ripped out from the root," if it can still produce the result of a headache?

སྤྲིག་པའི་ལས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་མ་ལུས་པར་རྫོགས་པ་དཔྱལ་བའི་སྤྲིག་བསྐྱལ་  
ཉམས་སུ་སྤོང་བར་འགྱུར་བ་ལས་གང་དག་གིས་དཔྱལ་བའི་སྤྲིག་བསྐྱལ་སྤྲོ་མོ་ཚམ་  
ཡང་ཉམས་སུ་སྤོང་བར་མ་གྱུར་པ་དེ་ཉིད་ཤིན་ཏུ་རྩ་བ་ནས་སྤུང་བ་ཇི་ལྟར་མ་ཡིན།  
མགོ་བོ་ཚ་བ་ལ་སོགས་པ་འདི་ལ་འབྱུང་བས་འབྲས་བུ་ཡི་མེད་པར་འབྱུང་བ་ཡང་ཇི་  
ལྟར་ཡིན།

If the complete and total result of some number of bad deeds is that one must undergo an experience of the sufferings of the hell realms; and if one escapes without having to undergo even the slightest suffering of hell; then how on earth can you say that they have failed to rip these same bad deeds out, from their very root? And why would we say that no result at all occurred, if the person did experience a headache or the like?

གལ་ཏེ་སྤྲིག་པ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཟད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་ཡིན་ན། ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་སྤོན་གྱི་ལས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པར་  
སྤོན་པ་ནི་མ་གཏོགས་སོ་ཞེས་བསྟན་ཅེ་ན། དཔྱུས་ལོང་དང་། མིག་ཅིག་པ་དང་།  
ཞ་བོ་དང་། ཐེད་པོ་དང་། རླུགས་པ་དང་། འོན་པ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་དུ་གྱུར་  
པའི་རྒྱུ་འབྲས་བུ་ཉེ་བར་ལོངས་སྤོང་བ་ལས་དགོངས་ནས་བསྟན་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ། གང་  
གི་ཕྱིར་རྣམ་པར་སྤོན་པའི་གནས་སྐབས་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོར་གྱུར་པའི་ལས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་འབྲས་བུ་  
ནི་ཡོངས་སུ་ཟད་པར་རྟུས་པ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།



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One may further ask:

If it's true that "you finish off the bad deed perfectly," then why does scripture say that "the ripening of previous karmas is excepted"?

The answer is that this statement was made with respect to undergoing inherent internal results such as blindness, loss of an eye, a crooked leg, a bad leg, dumbness, deafness, or the like. The point is that these practices have no power to eliminate the results of karma which have already reached the status of having ripened

རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་པའི་སེམས་པས་མངོན་པར་འདུས་བྱས་པ་ནི་སེམས་པའི་བྱུང་པར་གཞན་  
ཐོབ་པ་ན་ཡོངས་སུ་ཟད་པར་འགྱུར་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཇི་ལྟར་སོར་མེའི་སྤང་བ་དང་། མ་  
སྐྱིས་དགའ་དང་། ལྷ་ཀ་དང་། ཕག་གསོད་པ་དང་། ལྷ་ངན་མེད་པ་ལ་སོགས་པ་དག་  
ལ་བརྟེན་པ་བཞིན་ནོ།།

The way that karma works is that the state of mind which functions as a cause brings the result together; and if you are able to reach other special states of mind then you can finish off the karmas completely. Examples would be String of Fingers, and Ajata Shatru, and Svaka, and Swine Killer, and Beyond Grief, and other such persons who were able to accomplish purification.

གལ་ཏེ་མ་སྐྱིས་དགའ་དང་། མ་གསོད་པ་དག་ལ་དག་བའི་སེམས་པ་གཞན་སྐྱིས་པ་  
ཡོད་བཞིན་དུ་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་ལས་ཟད་པར་མ་རྒྱུར་ནས་མནར་མེད་པ་དག་ཏུ་སྐྱིས་ཤི་ན།  
དེའི་ལས་དང་འབྲས་བུ་ཡིད་ཆེས་པ་བསྐྱེད་པའི་ཕྱིར་མནར་མེད་པ་ལ་སོགས་པར་སྐྱི་  
བ་བསྐྱེད་པ་ཡིན་གྱི། ལས་རྣམས་ལྷག་མ་མ་ལུས་པར་མ་ཟད་པ་ནི་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ། དར་  
གྱི་ཕོ་ལོང་བརྟུགས་པ་ལས་འཕར་བ་བཞིན་དུ་དེར་སྐྱིས་ཤིང་ཐར་པ་ཡིན་ལ། དཔྱུལ་  
བའི་མེའི་སྤང་བ་ལ་སོགས་པས་ཀྱང་རིག་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ། དེ་ལྟར་སྤྲིག་པ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཙ་བ་  
ནས་འབྲིན་པར་ཡང་གྲུབ་ལ། ལས་ལ་འབྲས་བུ་མེད་པ་ཡང་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

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One may then ask this question:

If it's true that Ajata Shatru and the one who killed his mother were able to develop other, very virtuous states of mind, then how come it didn't work to finish off their karma, and why were they born into the Hell Without Respite?

Lord Buddha taught that they were born into the Hell Without Respite and the like only because he wanted disciples to gain faith in the laws of karma and its consequences relating to these people.

It's not though that they were unable to finish off their karma completely, without anything left at all. They were born in the hell and then escaped from it like a bouncing ball, and none of the strings of hellfire, nor anything of the like, ever touched them in the slightest. This again demonstrates how the karma of bad deeds can be ripped out from its very roots, without our having to say that the karma had no result at all.

ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ་རིག་པ་རྣམས་འདི་སྣམ་དུ་སེམས་ཏེ། གཉེན་པོ་ཐོབ་པར་གྱུར་ན་ནི་  
ལས་རྣམས་ཤིན་ཏུ་རྩ་བ་ནས་འབྲིན་གྱི། གཉེན་པོས་ཟེལ་གྱིས་མ་མཚན་པ་ནི་ཉམས་  
པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ་སྣམ་སྟེ། ཇི་ལྟར་ཐབས་ལ་མཁས་པ་དང་མི་ལྡན་པ་ལ་ནི་སྲིག་པ་  
རྒྱུ་དུ་ཡང་རྣམ་པར་སྲིན་པར་འགྱུར་བར་མཐོང་སྟེ། མྱོད་གལ་གྱི་བྱ་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་  
སོགས་པ་བཞིན་ནོ།།

Those who understand the greater way think to themselves like this:

If you are able to succeed in applying the antidote, then karma is ripped from its very roots, completely. If however the antidote does not entirely overwhelm the karma, then the karma is not ruined. This is similar to the case you have with those who lack what we call "skillful means," for they must see the karmic ripening even of very minor bad deeds. An example would be the great Maudgalyayana, or the like.

དགོ་བའི་རྩ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་བསགས་སུ་ཟེན་ན། ཡང་ཡིད་གྱི་ཉེས་པས་ཐལ་བ་བཞིན་དུ་

བྱེད་དེ། ཇི་ལྟར་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཟེལ་གྱིས་གཞོན་པའི་བསྟན་པ་ལ་  
ཞལ་ཏེ་བྱེད་པའི་དགོངས་པ་བཞིན་ནོ།།

Suppose further that you have been able to collect some major amount of good karma; still some mental mistake can smash it into dust. An example here would be the monk who was the steward, during the time of the Buddha named "The One Who Outshines All Others."

དེས་ནི་སྟོན་དབྱ་བཅོམ་པ་ཆེན་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བསྟོན་བཀུར་དང་པོར་བྱས་པ་ལས་ཕྱིས་  
འདོད་པ་མི་བཟད་པས་ཟེལ་གྱིས་མནན་ཏེ། ཚོགས་ཀྱི་དཀོར་བརྟུགས་ཤིང་སྤང་བར་  
གྱུར་པའི་ཡིད་ཀྱིས་ཁྲོས་པའི་ཚིག་དག་གིས་ཀྱང་གཤེགས་ཏེ། དེ་ལས་དེས་མི་གཙང་  
བ་ཟ་བའི་སྲིན་དུ་ཤིན་ཏུ་གདོན་པར་དཀའ་བའི་གནས་སུ་སྐྱེས་ཤིང་དགོ་བའི་རྩ་བ་  
ཡང་ཅུང་ཟད་ཅོམ་ཡང་མ་ལུས་པར་གྱུར་ཏེ།

At the beginning, this particular monk paid homage and made offerings to all the great enemy destroyers; later, he was overcome by intense desire. He began to steal offerings and also berate others with words of anger when his temper got out of control. The karma of this caused him to be born as a spirit that was forced to eat filth, in a world very difficult to escape from. In the end, he became a person who lacked even the slightest collection of good karma.

ཚོགས་པ་བརྗོད་པ་ལས་ཀྱང་བྱང་རྒྱུ་སེམས་དཔའ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཐབས་ལ་མཁས་  
པའི་སྟོབས་དང་ལྡན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ནི་མི་དགོ་བའི་ཕྱང་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡང་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཟད་པར་  
བྱེད་ཅིང་། དགོ་བའི་རྩ་བ་རྒྱུ་དུ་ཐོབ་པ་ཡང་ཉམས་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ་ཞེས་གསུངས་  
པ་དང་།

In the accounts of past lives too we see bodhisattvas and the like who have gained the power of skillfull means, and who are said to be able to finish off even a great mountain of bad deeds. It is said as well that they are able to make it so that even their most minor collections of virtue never degenerate.

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མདོ་སྡེ་ལས་ཀྱང་ཇི་སྐད་དུ། དག་སྒོང་དག་འདི་ལྟ་སྟེ། རྐྱེས་བུ་ཞིག་གིས་ཚུ་ཉུང་བུ་  
ཞིག་ཏུ་ལན་ཚུ་སྤང་གཅིག་སྐྱབས་ན་དེ་ནི་བཏུང་དུ་མི་རུང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ། །དེ་ནས་  
རྐྱེས་བུ་གཞན་ཞིག་གིས་ཚུ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཆེན་པོའི་ནང་དུ་ལན་ཚུ་སྤང་གཅིག་སྐྱབས་ན་དེ་ནི་  
ཤེས་པར་ཡང་མི་འགྱུར་ན་ཡང་དེ་བཏུང་དུ་མི་རུང་བར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།

There is, furthermore, the following found in sutra:

This is the way it is, o monks. Suppose some person pours a gram of salt into a very small amount of water; it then becomes unfit to drink. Suppose another person then comes along and pours a gram of salt into some very vast amount of water; why would it ever become unfit to drink, if you couldn't even tell there was any salt at all in it?

དེ་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་ཞེ་ན། དག་སྒོང་དག་ཚུ་ཤིན་ཏུ་མང་པོའི་ཕྱིར་རོ། །དག་སྒོང་དག་དེ་  
བཞིན་དུ་གང་འདི་ལྟར་རྐྱེས་བུ་གང་ཟག་འགའ་ཞིག་སྒྲིག་པའི་ལས་བྱེད་པ་དེ་དག་དེ་  
ཉིད་ཕྱོགས་གཉིས་པོ་འདི་ལ་གནས་པ་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན་ནོ། །

And why is this so? Because, o monks, there is so much water. And you should understand, o monks, that there are real people in the world who commit bad deeds, and whose deeds are similar to either one of these two cases.

དེ་བཞིན་དུ། ཇིང་ཆེན་ནང་དུ་ཚུ་ནི་སྤང་གཅིག་སྐྱབས། ཇི་ལྟར་ཚུ་དེ་བཏུང་དུ་མི་  
འདོད་མིན། །སྐྱོར་གང་ཚུ་ལ་ཚུ་ནི་སྤང་གཅིག་སྐྱབས། །སྐྱོར་གང་ཚུ་དེ་བཏུང་དུ་  
འདོད་མི་འགྱུར།

We see the same point made in the following verse:

Suppose you pour a gram of salt into some massive pool;  
It doesn't make it less desirable to drink the water there.  
Suppose though that you pour a gram of salt into the water  
That you could hold within your palm; now that you wouldn't drink.

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དེ་བཞིན་གང་གིས་བསོད་ནམས་སྐྱེ་ཆེན་བསགས། །མི་དེ་སྤྲིག་པའི་དུག་ནི་ཚུང་  
གྱུར་པས། །གང་སྤྱིར་ངན་འགོ་དག་ཏུ་འབྲིད་མི་ལུས། །སློེ་དེ་ནས་ནི་འབྲས་བུ་  
འགའ་ཞིག་ཡིན།

It's just the same with a person who's been able to collect  
A great quantity of merit; he might swallow a bit of the poison  
Of bad deeds, but it will never be enough to take him to  
The lower realms; he'll rather just have some small results.

།གང་དག་བསོད་ནམས་ཚུང་དུ་མ་བསགས་ཤིང་། །མི་དགེ་མང་དུ་ཡང་ཡང་  
བསགས་པའི་མི། །ཐེ་ཚོམ་མིད་པར་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཚུང་བས་ཀྱང་། །ཉོན་མོངས་དེ་ནི་འོག་  
ཏུ་འབྲིད་པར་བྱེད། །ཅེས་གསུངས་ཏེ། །མི་འཕྲོད་པའི་ཟས་ཅུང་ཟད་ཅིག་ཟོས་པ་  
བཞིན་དུ་འོ་ཞེས་བྱའོ།

Suppose though there's a person who's failed to collect even minor merit,  
But who's managed to amass, over and over, a great many negative deeds.  
Without a doubt they'll be undone by even the smallest wrong thing,  
And be dragged down by it to the realms that lie down underneath.

The point here is that "It's like eating just a small bit of some spoiled food."

གལ་ཏེ་དེ་ལྟར་སེམས་དང་པོ་བསྐྱེད་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་ལས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཟད་པར་འགྱུར་  
བ་ཡིན་ན། །མངོན་པར་རྫོགས་པར་བྱང་རྒྱུ་པའི་བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས་ལ་སེང་སྲིད་གི་  
ཚལ་བས་རྩུག་པ་དང་། །མངོས་མ་བསད་པ་དང་། །དྲིགས་མས་སྐྱུར་བ་བཏབ་པ་དང་།  
ལྷུང་བཟེད་ཇི་ལྟར་བཀུས་པ་བཞིན་དུ་སྤྱིར་གཤེགས་པ་དང་། །ལྷ་བ་གསུམ་དུ་ནས་ཀྱིས་་  
ཚོས་སྡོན་མཛད་པ་དང་། །བར་དུ་ཇོ་བོས་པས་ངན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བ་དང་། །བསྐྱེད་བར་གྱུར་པ་  
དང་། །ལྷ་སྐྱིན་གྱིས་དོའི་སྐྱོགས་འཕངས་པ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ལས་ཀྱི་ནམ་པར་སྐྱིན་པའི་

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ཆ་མངའ་བར་གྱུར་པ་ཇི་ལྟ་བུ་ཞེ་ན།

One may ask yet another question:

If this is the case; if it's true that even just the first experience of the Wish for enlightenment can finish off all of one's karmic seeds, then how could a fully enlightened being, the Conqueror, ever undergo even some part of a karmic ripening? How could he suffer being pierced by a sandalwood thorn? What about the murder of the maiden [that he said he could not perceive]? What about his being maligned by the proud woman? What about the fact that he had to go three months teaching Dharma living off bits of barley, walking around with his sage's bowl as clean as a whistle? And the fact that Dzatro criticized him, and that he had to go hungry? And what about the time that Devadatta tried to shoot him with a rock thrown from a catapult, and all the rest?

[The Tibetan in some places here seems as though it could be corrupt, and should be checked later against an original copy.]

འདི་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་ནི་ཐབས་ལ་མཁས་པས་སེམས་ཅན་གྲུལ་བར་མཇུག་པའི་ཕྱིར་  
བསྟན་པ་ཡིན་གྱི། བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས་ལ་ནི་ཕྱིན་ལས་ཀྱི་ཆ་ཤིན་ཏུ་སྤྲ་བ་ཡང་མི་མངའ་  
སྟེ། ཇི་ལྟར་ཐབས་ལ་མཁས་པའི་མདོ་དང་། འཇིག་རྟེན་ལས་འདས་པའི་ལེའུ་ལས།  
རིགས་ཀྱི་བུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པས་ལས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པར་སྦྱིན་པ་བཅུ་བསྟན་པ་འདི་དག་  
ནི་ཐབས་ལ་མཁས་པ་དང་ལྷུ་མ་དགོངས་ཀྱི་བཀའ་ཡིན་པར་རྟོགས་པར་བྱའོ།།

The answer is that all of these were just a show put on to help tame the minds of living beings; it was all just skillful means. The Conqueror undertook not even the tiniest bit of normal actions; as *The Sutra on Skillful Means* and *The Chapter on Going Beyond the World* both state—

Consider, o child of noble family, how Those Gone Thus give the appearance of having to go through some karma from the ten bad deeds seeming to ripen upon them. You must understand that all of this is just skillful means, just words spoken as a ruse to help others.

འདི་ནི་གནས་མ་ཡིན་ཞིང་སྐབས་མེད་དེ། ཇི་སྲིད་སྐྱའི་ཙེ་མོས་གཟུགས་པའི་ཚད་  
གྱིས་བསྟན་པ་ཙམ་གྱིས་མི་དགོ་བའི་རྩ་བ་དང་ལྡན་པར་གྱུར་པའི་བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་  
དཔའ་ཡང་བྱང་ཚུབ་གྱི་ཤིང་བྱང་དུ་འདུག་པ་ནི་གནས་མ་ཡིན་པར་ཤེས་ཏེ། དགོ་  
བའི་ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་ལྡན་པར་གྱུར་པའི་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་མི་དགོ་བ་ཐམས་  
ཅད་སྤངས་པར་གྱུར་པ། བག་ཆགས་གྱི་མཚམས་སྟོར་བ་དང་བཅས་པ་ཡང་སྤངས་  
པའི་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ལ་ལས་གྱི་སྒྲིབ་པའི་སྟོན་ལྟ་འབྱུང་བར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།

In actuality, all these things are completely beyond the realm of possibility; there is no chance that they could have really happened. They had about as much reality as a sketch done with a single hair; you have to realize that this pose of being a bodhisattva with roots of non-virtue and then sitting under the tree there was a total impossibility. A being Gone Thus, one who possesses each and every virtuous quality, has eliminated each and every non-virtue; so too have they eliminated the very trace of even the seeds for negativity. How on earth then could One Thus Gone ever have any problem with some karmic obstacle?

འོན་ཀྱང་སེམས་ཅན་པལ་ཆེར་ལས་གྱི་རྣམ་པར་སྒྲིན་པ་ཚུད་གསོན་པ་དང་། ལས་གྱི་  
རྣམ་པར་སྒྲིན་པ་ལ་ཡིད་མི་ཆེས་པ་དེ་རྣམས་ལ་ལས་གྱི་རྣམ་པར་སྒྲིན་པ་བསྟན་པར་  
བྱ་བའི་སྤྱིར་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པས་སྤོན་ལས་གྱི་རྣམ་པར་སྒྲིན་པ་བསྟན་ཏེ།

The vast majority of living beings though believe that the ripening of karma can, over time, just go away by itself; or they doubt the whole idea of karma ripening in the first place. It was for people like this that the One Thus Gone, as one of his enlightened acts, pretended to undergo some ripening of his past deeds—to teach them about the entire concept.

ཚོས་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་བབ་ཡང་རེ་ཞིག་ལས་གྱི་རྣམ་པར་སྒྲིན་པ་འབྱུང་ན། བྱིད་རྣམས་ལ་  
ལྟ་ལས་གྱི་རྣམ་པར་སྒྲིན་པ་ཅིའི་སྤྱིར་མི་འབྱུང་ཞེས་བསྟན་པ་ཡིན་གྱི། དེ་བཞིན་

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གཤེགས་པ་ལ་ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱབ་པ་ནི་ཅུང་ཞིག་ཀྱང་མི་མངའ་སྟེ།

Lord Buddha is telling these people: "If this kind of thing can descend on the King of the Dharma—if karma can ripen at times even upon me—then what need mention how karma can ripen on all of you?" A being Gone Thus could never really have even the slightest karmic obstacle.

འདི་ལྟར་ལེགས་པར་བསྐྱབས་པའི་སྒྲིན་པ་བདག་ཉིད་ལ་ནད་མེད་བཞིན་དུ་ཡང་ན་  
བལྟར་བསྐྱར་ནས་སྒྲིན་ཁབ་དང་ཚ་བ་དག་བསྐྱེན་པར་བྱས་པས་དེའི་རྗེས་སུ་སྐྱོབ་པའི་  
ནད་པ་དག་ཡོངས་སུ་སོས་པར་བྱེད་པ་དེ་བཞིན་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་སྒྲིན་པའི་  
རྒྱལ་པོ་གཞོན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཞི་བར་མཇུག་པས་ཀྱང་སྐྱབ་པ་མི་མངའ་ན་ཡང་ངའི་  
ལས་འདིའོ་རྣམ་པར་སྐྱིན་པ་ནི་འདི་འོ་ཞེས་ཐིན་ལས་སྟོན་པར་མཇུག་དེ།

Think of a very well-trained physician; he may not have any kind of illness himself, but still he might let his own blood, or stick himself with a medicine needle, or apply hot steel to himself, just so his students, the sick ones who are following him, will allow him to use these same methods to cure them. The One Gone Thus, the king of all physicians, is the same. Despite the fact that he has put a stop to every harm he himself could ever undergo, and so has no possible obstacle at all, he nonetheless undertakes as one of his enlightened acts to pretend, and to say "this is my karma," and "this is my karma ripening."

ཇི་ལྟར་ན་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ལས་ཀྱིས་འཇིགས་ཤིང་སྐྱབ་པར་བྱུང་ན། ལུས་དང་  
ངག་དང་ཡིད་རྣམས་ཡོངས་སུ་དག་པར་འགྱུར། །ཞེས་ཀྱང་གསུངས་སོ།།

This same point is made in the lines that go—

As long as living beings have fear and terror over karma,  
Then their acts and words and thoughts as well turn pure.

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One of the most famed commentaries of all on *The Treasure House of Higher Knowledge* (the *Abhidharmakosha*) of Master Vasubandhu is *The "Chim" Commentary*, by the brilliant Sakya writer Chim Jampay Yang (c. 1280). He mentions the functions of the four powers briefly in the following selection:



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ཐེག་པ་གོང་མ་པ་དག་ནི་ཡང་དག་པར་སྐྱོང་བ་བཞི་ནི་གཉིས་པོ་སྟོབས་བཞིའི་རང་  
བཞིན་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཐེག་པ་སྐྱེས་པ་སྐྱོང་བ་ནི་ཉེན་གྱི་སྟོབས་དང་རྣམ་པར་སྐྱུན་འབྲུན་པའི་  
སྟོབས་སོ། །མ་སྐྱེས་པ་མི་བསྐྱེད་པ་ནི་ཉེས་པ་ལས་ལྷོག་པའི་སྟོབས་སོ། །ཕྱི་མ་  
གཉིས་ནི་གཉིས་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྐྱོད་པའི་སྟོབས་ཡིན་ཅེས་བཞེད་དོ། །

Those of the upper way say that the essence of the four destructions is none other than the four powers. They say that destroying negative deeds that you've done already relates to the power of the foundation and the power of destruction. Preventing negative deeds that you haven't done yet relates to the power of stopping wrong deeds. The latter two destructions relate to the power of an antidote activity.

[The latter two destructions, by the way, are (3) trying to do good deeds that you haven't yet done; and (4) trying to maintain the good deeds that you have already done, and to keep them going in the future.]

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A wealth of detail on the mechanism of the four powers is found in *The "Song for Opening Pure Hearts," consisting of Responses to Questions Posed with Motivations of Purest White*, a treatise in verse by the First Panchen Lama:

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༘ །དག་སྐྱེག་སྟོབས་ལྡན་འབྲེས་མ་རུ།  
།སྐྱོད་པའི་དག་བས་སྐྱེག་པ་ཡི།  
།རྣམ་སྐྱེན་འབྲུན་པར་མི་བྱེད་དང་།  
།དེ་བཞིན་དེ་ལས་ལྷོག་པ་དང་།  
།གཉིས་ཀ་མགོ་མཉམ་གཉིས་ཀ་ཡི།  
།འབྲས་བུ་འབྲུན་པར་མི་བྱེད་དང་།

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When you commit good and bad deeds  
Of tremendous power mixed together,  
It can either happen that the good prevents  
The bad from ripening; or else the reverse;  
Or that they work equally against each other,  
Each preventing the other from giving its result.

།སྒྲོན་བསགས་སྒྲིག་པ་བཤགས་པ་ཡི།

།དག་བ་བྱིས་འབྱུང་ཁོང་ཁྲོ་ཡིས།

།བཅོམ་པས་བཤགས་ཟེན་སྒྲིག་པ་ཡི།

།འབྲས་བུ་སྐྱར་ཡང་སྒྲིག་པ་དང་།

།ཁོང་ཁྲོས་བཅོམས་པའི་གང་ཟག་གིས།

།དག་བ་ཅི་བྱས་སྒྲིག་པ་ཡིས།

།འབྲས་བུ་མི་སྲིད་བྱས་པ་དང་།

It can even happen that the virtue  
Of confessing a bad deed you collected before  
Can be destroyed by a moment of anger  
That comes along to you after that.  
Still the result of the bad deed,  
The one you've already confessed,  
Has been stopped, and whatever good deed  
The person whom anger's destroyed  
May have done has made it impossible  
For the bad deed to give its result.

།གང་ཟག་འདི་དང་ཁོང་ཁྲོའི་སེམས།

།སྐྱད་ཅིག་ཡན་ཆད་སྐྱེས་པ་ཡི།

།སྐྱེས་བུས་དག་བ་གང་བྱས་ཀྱང་།

།དོན་མེད་སོང་བར་ཁས་མི་ལེན།

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Thus we do not assert  
That whatever good which was done  
By this person up to the moment  
That they began to have the anger  
Has lost all of its meaning.

།དེ་བཞིན་དག་དང་སླིག་པ་དག།  
།སློབས་ལྷན་དེ་ཡིས་སློབས་ཚུང་བའི།  
།རྣམ་སློན་འབྲིན་པ་ཐག་བསྐྱངས་པ།  
།བཅོམས་པའི་དོན་དུ་མི་འདོད་ལགས།

Neither as well do we assert  
That what it means to "destroy"  
Is simply that when you've done a right  
And a wrong the one with greater power  
Has postponed the karmic result  
Of the one with lesser strength.

།དག་སླིག་འདྲེས་མར་སྐྱད་པ་ཡང་།  
།གོགས་བྱེད་དག་དང་མ་འཕྲད་ན།  
།ལས་རྣམས་སོ་སོར་ངས་པའི་ཕྱིར།  
།འབྲས་བུ་འདྲེས་མར་སོ་སོར་སྐྱོང་།

Whenever you do an action that mixes  
A good deed with a bad,  
And assuming that neither karmic seed  
Meets up with something to block it,  
Then because the karmas are always separate  
Things, you will have an experience  
Of separate results, which come however together.

།ཆ་མཉམ་འབྲས་བུ་སློན་ཚུལ་ཡང་།

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ལས་གྱིས་འཁོར་བར་སྡི་གང་དང་།  
ཉེ་བ་གང་དང་གོམས་པ་གང་།  
སློན་བྱས་གང་ཡིན་དེ་དག་ལས།  
སློན་མ་སློན་མ་ནམ་སློན་འགྱུར།  
ཞེས་གསུངས་ཅི་བཞིན་འབྲས་བུ་འབྱིན།

How then is it that the results  
Of equal actions ripen?  
The way that karma ripens is by  
Priority, with each of the following  
Occuring before the next:  
Those which are the most serious;  
Those which have happened more recently;  
Those which you do habitually;  
And those which you did long ago.  
This, it is stated in scripture,  
Is how they give their results.

འོན་ཀྱང་དགོ་སྡིག་སློབས་ཆེ་བ།  
འདྲ་འདྲེས་སྡུད་པ་དེ་ཡི་ཚེ།  
པན་ཚུན་འཛོམས་པའང་སྲིད་པ་སྟེ།  
སྐྱབས་དེར་བྱང་རྒྱབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ལ།  
ཁྲོ་དང་ལོག་ལྷ་མི་བཟད་སྐྱེས།  
དེ་ཚེ་དགོ་རྩ་ཅི་རིགས་འཛོམས།

When however you do good and bad  
Of great and similar power together,  
It's also possible that they could destroy  
One another in a mutual fashion.  
At this point one should mention  
That if you develop anger

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Towards a bodhisattva, or else  
Give rise to intense wrong views,  
It destroys your collection of goodness  
In a corresponding way.

།དེ་ལྟར་མགོན་པོ་ཞི་བ་ལྷན།

།བསྐྱེད་པ་སྣོང་དུ་བསགས་པ་ཡི།

།སྐྱིན་དང་བདེ་གཤེགས་མཚོད་ལ་སོགས།

།ལེགས་སྤྱད་གང་ཡིན་དེ་ཀུན་ཀྱང་།

།ཁོང་ཚོ་གཅིག་གིས་འཇོམས་ཞེས་གསུངས།

It's on this point that our protector,  
The master Shantideva,  
Has said that "A single moment  
Of anger can destroy  
All the good deeds that we've collected  
Over the length of a thousand eons  
From acts of giving, and offering  
To Those Gone to Bliss, and the like."

།དེ་བཞིན་དུས་དེར་སྣོང་པ་ཉིད།

།གོམས་ནས་མངོན་སུམ་ཏྟགས་གྱུར་ན།

།སྤྲིག་པའི་ས་བོན་དག་ཀྱང་འབྱིན།

So too if you are able  
To get used to the concept of emptiness,  
Then you'll come to see it directly  
And destroy the seed of bad deeds as well.

།དོ་ཇི་སྣོང་པོ་རྒྱན་ལས་ཀྱང་།

།རྣལ་འབྱོར་གཅིག་གཅིག་ཤེས་བྱས་ནས།

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།དབེན་པར་སོང་སྟེ་རབ་འབད་ན།

།སྟིག་དག་ཚེ་འདིར་སངས་རྒྱས་འགྲུབ།

*The Essential Diamond Ornament* says  
As well that if you master  
Any one of the high practices  
And then go into seclusion  
And make the highest efforts,  
You will clean yourself of all of  
Your bad deeds, and in this same life  
Reach total enlightenment.

།ཚེས་བདག་མེད་པ་རབ་བསྐྱེམས་ན།

།ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་བོང་དུ་རྒྱད།

།ཅིས་གསུངས་དག་སྟིག་པན་རྒྱན་དུ།

།གཞོན་བྱ་གཞོན་བྱེད་གསུངས་པ་ཡང་།

།འདི་འདྲའི་རྒྱལ་ལ་དགོངས་པ་ཡིན།

It's said that "If you meditate well  
On the lack of self existence  
To things, you'll come to grasp  
The goal of all-knowingness."  
And so despite the fact that it seems  
That good and bad deeds attack  
The power of each other,  
The lines were meant to refer  
To the process as we've described it.

།པན་རྒྱན་བཅོམ་པར་གསུངས་པ་ཡང་།

།ཟབ་མེད་ལམ་གྱིས་མ་གཏོགས་པར།

།ས་བོན་འབྱེན་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་།

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།ད་གཞོན་རྒྱུན་དང་ཕྱད་ན་ཡང་།

།འབྲས་བུ་འབྲེན་པ་བཅོམ་པ་ཡིན།

And though it's said that they can destroy  
Each other, the fact is that—  
Except for the path of the profound  
There is nothing that tears the seed  
From its roots; nonetheless,  
Their ability to give their result  
Is destroyed even should they meet  
With the needed conditions later.

།དེ་ལྟར་སྲོད་ཕྱོགས་ནི་བ་ཡི།

།དབྱངས་ཅན་ལྷ་མེད་ཕྱག་གཉིས་སུ།

།དྲིས་ལན་ཡིད་འོང་བེ་རྒྱ།

།ཏམ་བུ་ར་འདི་ཁོ་བོས་ཕུལ།

I offer this tambura lute  
Made of pure lapis lazuli  
Into the waiting hands of the goddess  
Of poetry, Sarasvati;  
This is a gift of my answers  
To questions asked of me  
Regarding the subject of conduct.

### The Four Powers in the Secret Teachings of Tantra

Secret teachings being secret, there's not much detail we can put here about the use of the four powers in tantra. It's very important though to establish that the various methods of purification taught in the secret way are founded firmly on this instruction; so we will give just enough here to show that this is truly so.

The first selection here is taken from an explanation of the practice of the Warrior of Diamond (Vajrasattva) by Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra (1772-1851) entitled *The "Excellent Vase of Purifying Nectar," being a Method for the Practice of Meditation and Recitation in the Teaching of the Glorious Diamond Warrior (Vajrasattva)*.

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། གྲི་མ་ཉིས་ལྷུང་མཚན་མེད་མུན་བཞིན་འཐེབས།  
། དག་བའི་སློ་བྲོས་སློག་འོད་ལས་ཀྱང་དགོན།  
། འོན་ཏེ་སློབས་བཞིའི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་ཡོངས་རྫོགས་པའི།  
། བསྐྱེམ་བཞུས་ནམ་མཁའ་འོ་ཚོར་བྱ་དང་འདྲིར་ཤར།

Ah the pain; the bad deeds and vows I've broken  
cover my life like some dark night;  
Those brief periods of virtuous thought in me  
are more rare than flashes of lightning.  
But today there is hope; the skyjewel of meditation  
and recitation on the entire  
Secret world of the mandala of the four powers  
is rising and shining upon me now.

["Skyjewel" is a poeticism for the sun in the sky.]

། རྩལ་འདི་ཕྱག་དོག་དུག་རྩལ་རྣམ་དཔྱོད་མིག  
། ཉམས་པའི་གཉིས་སྐྱིས་ཡིད་ལ་རྩ་མཚན་ཏེ།  
། བཟུང་གནས་སློ་གསལ་རྐང་དུག་ཚོགས་རྣམས་ལ།  
། འཇིགས་བཤད་སྤང་ཕྱི་སྟེར་བའི་སྒྲ་མ་ཡིན།

This way of teaching things is a sharp knife  
to the minds of the twiceborn whose eyes  
Of ascertainment were ruined when the venom  
of jealousy splashed into them.  
It is though ultimate instruction that pours  
the honey of fine explanation into  
The mouths of the mass of sixlegs  
who have clear and unbiased minds.

["Twiceborn" refers to (among other things) birds, who have been born once when their egg came out of their mother and once when they emerged from the egg. "Sixlegs" means "bees." The point of this classical poetry seems to be



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that intelligent people, like bees, are able to thread around the thorns on a flower and get the nectar that clumsy birds (jealous, competitive scholars) are unable to extract. Or perhaps the "sharp knife" is the sting of a snake, as snakes traditionally fight the kings of all birds—the garudas. At any rate, the point is the same.]

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Here next is how His Holiness the First Panchen Lama describes the use of the four powers in the tantric teachings; the selection is found in *A Compilation of Scattered Works by the Panchen Lama, the Great All-Knowing One*:

ཡང་དོན་སེམས་དཔའི་བསྐྱོམ་བཞུས་དང་། སངས་རྒྱས་སོ་ལྔ་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་ལྷུང་  
བཤགས་གཉིས་ཀ་ལ་ཡང་སྟོབས་བཞི་ཚང་བས། སློབ་བཤགས་ལུལ་དུ་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན་  
པས་ཉམས་ལེན་འཚལ།

The four powers are found, in their entirety, both in the practice of meditation and recitation upon the Warrior of Diamond, Vajrasattva, and in the rite of confession based upon the 35 Buddhas. This makes them the most extraordinary methods of purifying yourself of your past bad karmas, and you must do your best to practice them yourself.

།ཕན་བདེའི་འོད་སྟོང་སློབ་བྱེད་ཅིང་།  
།མི་བཟད་སྐྱབ་བསྐྱེད་གནས་ལྷགས་ཀྱི།  
།མདའ་ཆར་སྟོང་འབབས་སློབ་ལྷུང་གི།  
།སློབ་སྐྱབ་ནག་པོ་དགྲིགས་པ་ཡང་།  
།སྟོབས་བཞིའི་བཤགས་བསྐྱེད་མན་ངག་གི།  
།འཕྲོར་བྱེད་དྲག་པོས་ཅིག་ཅར་འཇོམས།

The sky is wrapped in the thick black clouds  
of my bad deeds and broken vows;  
They cover the thousand lights of help and happiness,  
and send down upon me a thousand  
Rainshowers made of drops of spears

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fashioned from steel of the sky:  
Sufferings hard and fierce. These instructions though  
on purification with the four powers  
Are a mighty torrent of words that scatter  
the clouds, smashing them in an instant.

["Thouand lights" is a poeticism for the sun. "Steel of the sky" refers to iron ore on the earth which has been struck by lightning, or else the steel created as a meteor strikes the ground, and is thought to be the strongest iron of all. "Torrent of words" is also a poeticism for the parrot, which is known for its eloquence; the emblem of the ancient Tibetan translators was a parrot with two heads (the ability to speak and read both Sanskrit and Tibetan).]

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The great Choney Lama of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery, who lived 1675-1748, has the following to say about the four powers and tantra in his *"Clarification of All the Major Points,"* being an Explanation of the Creation Stage in the Teaching of the Secret Collection (*Guhyasamaja*):

སྒྲོམ་བཟླས་འདི་ལ་སྣོ་བས་བཞི་ཚང་བ་ཡིན་ཏེ། སྐབས་འགྲོ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་ནི་ཉིན་གྱི་  
སྣོ་བས།

This practice of recitation and meditation contains all four of the powers of purification. When you go for refuge and practice the Wish for enlightenment, you are fulfilling the power of the foundation.

སྒྲོམ་བཟླས་ཀྱིས་གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྐྱེད་པ། བདག་ནི་མི་ཤེས་ཞེས་སོགས་ཀྱིས་སུན་  
འབྱེན་པའི་སྣོ་བས་བསྐྱེད་ནས་ལུགས་ལ་སྦྱར་སྲོག་པའི་སྣོ་བས་བསྐྱེད་ཏོ།

The recitation and meditation itself is the activity of the antidote. The part that starts with "I don't know anything at all" [the traditional apology for being unable to perform the practice with any knowledge or concentration] represents the power of destruction, and implies as well the power of stopping yourself from the bad deed in the future.

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For one of the most eloquent descriptions on how the four powers works, even in tantra, because of the emphasis on emptiness, we return to the description of the practice of the Warrior of Diamond (*Vajrasattva*) by Master Ngulchu

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Dharma Bhadra. The following is again taken from his "Excellent Vase of Purifying Nectar," being a Method for the Practice of Meditation and Recitation in the Teaching of the Glorious Diamond Warrior (Vajrasattva):

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མདོར་ན་རང་དོན་གཙོ་ཆེ་བའི་དམིགས་པ་དེ་གསུམ་རེ་མོས་གྱིས་ཉམས་སྲུ་ལེན་ཅིང་  
བར་བར་དུ་སྒྲིབ་འཛིན་དོན་མེད་མེད་ལུས་ལུས་ཉིད་སངས་རྒྱས་ཐམས་ཅད་གྱི་ཡི་  
ཤེས་གཅིག་ཏུ་བསྐྱེད་པའི་དོ་བོ་རྩ་བའི་སྣ་མ་དང་དབྱེར་མེད་དུ་བལྟས་ཏེ་མོས་གྲུས་  
ལྷགས་བྲག་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ་དང་།

To summarize, one should continue steadily with this practice of the three visualizations, which has the primary effect of achieving one's own goals. Intermittently then you should focus upon the Warrior of Diamond, man and wife, at the center tip of your head; see these simple two as being indivisible from your Root Lama, whose essence is the wisdom of each and every Enlightened Being, all in one. Reach then for deep, fierce feelings of devotion for them.

དོན་དམ་པར་བསྐྱེད་བསྐྱོམ་བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་། བསྐྱེད་བྱའི་སྣ་གསུམ་དང་། སྐྱེད་བྱའི་  
སྒྲིག་སྒྲིབ་སོགས་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་གྲུབ་པའི་ཚོས་རྩལ་ཙམ་ཡང་མེད་པར་ངེས་པའི་  
འཁོར་གསུམ་མི་དམིགས་པའི་རྒྱས་འདེབས་དང་།

Cement the whole practice at that moment, with a realization of the emptiness of the three spheres. See that, from an ultimate point of view, there is nobody practicing the recitation and meditation. And there is no manta being recited. And there is not a single atom of their own, inbuilt nature either to any of the bad karmas and obstacles that you are cleaning away with the practice—nor to any other aspect of what is going on at the moment.

ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཏུ་རྒྱ་འབྲས་བསྐྱེད་བ་མེད་པས་མི་ལམ་བཞིན་དུ་ཡིད་རྒྱུའི་མེ་འོང་བའི་རྣམ་  
སྒྲིན་འབྱེན་པའི་རྣམ་པ་ཅན་གྱི་སྒྲིག་སྒྲིབ་རྣམས་སྣ་མ་དོན་མེད་མེད་ལུས་ལུས་

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དང་། ལྷོབས་བཞི་ཚང་བའི་ཉིང་ངེ་འཇིན་གྱི་མཐུ་ལྷོབས་དང་། གཟུངས་སྐྱབས་ཟབ་  
མའི་བཟླས་བཟློད་གྱི་རྣམས་པ་ལ་བཏེན་ནས་ངེས་པར་སྦྱོང་རྣམས་སོ་སྣམ་དུ་བསམ་པ་  
དང་། རང་དང་སྣེང་གའི་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་སྣང་སྦྱོང་ཚོགས་པ་སྐྱུ་མ་ལྟ་  
བུའི་ངང་ནས་ཡི་གེ་བསྐྱུ་པའི་བཟླས་བཟློད་ལུས་ཆེས་ཆེས་བྱེད་པའི་མོས་པ་རྣམས་  
ཀྱང་བྱའོ།།

In an apparent way though remember that the laws of cause and effect are invariable; and so things can happen the same way as in a dream, where imaginary water can catch fire. You must at this point reflect to yourself that your negative karmas from the past—seeds which have all the power to give you a painful result—have beyond any doubt been wiped out, due to the tremendous force of the blessings of your Lama, the Warrior of Diamond; and due to the mighty energy of your concentration, infused as it is with all four of the powers; and due to the strength of the deep and secret mantras you have recited.

Don't forget at this juncture too to focus on the entire mass of all the living beings in the universe, all at your heart, and picture that they are sitting there, in the sphere of the great illusion, in the marriage of what we see and the emptiness of what we see, bursting forth in a roar with the great song of the secret mantra of a hundred syllables.

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The source of the power of the hundred-syllable mantra is further described by Pabongka Rinpoche in his *Commentary on the Ritual for the Secret Practice of the Angel of Diamond (Vajra Yogini)*:

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ཉིན་རེར་བཤམས་པ་ཐ་མ་ཞིག་བྱས་ཀྱང་དེའི་ཉིན་གྱི་སྤྲིག་ལྷུང་གི་འཕེལ་ཁ་འཆད་  
འགྲོ་བས་བཤམས་པ་བྱེད་པ་གནད་ཆེ། བཤམས་པ་ལྷོབས་ཆེན་འོང་བ་ལ་གཉེན་པོ་  
ལྷོབས་བཞི་ཚང་དགོས།

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If you are able to do a final purification at the end of every single day, it prevents the karmic energy of the bad deeds and broken vows from increasing; therefore this is one of the most essential of all practices. If you want the purification to have any great power at all, you must do it with all four of the antidote powers present.

འདིས་སྲོང་ངེས་ཀྱི་ལས་ཀྱང་འདག་ལུས་པ། དེ་འོང་མི་འོང་ད་གིན་ལུས་པ་ལྟར་ལས་  
འབྲས་ལ་ངེས་བ་རྟེན་མ་རྟེན་གྱི་རྗེས་སུ་འགོ་ལྷོག་བྱེད་གསུངས།

This kind of purification can clean away even karma which would otherwise be certain to give you a painful result. And holy beings have stated, as I just mentioned, that your ability to apply all four powers properly follows precisely from your ability to grasp, fully, the ways that karma and its consequences work: if you do grasp these laws, then you can really apply the four powers; if not, you can't.

སྣོབས་བཞི་ནི། ཐུགས་ཀའི་རྩེ་ལ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་བྱིན་རླབས་བསྐྱེད་པ་  
རྟེན་གྱི་སྣོབས་སུ་གསུངས་པ་སོགས་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། རང་ལུགས་འདིར་སྐབས་སེམས་  
བྱེད་པ་རྟེན་གྱི་སྣོབས།

Here are the four powers. Now there do exist references which state that the power of the foundation is the fact that the blessings of every enlightened being are concentrated in the *huung* syllable at your heart. Our own school of thought though says that the power of the foundation here is taking refuge and recalling the Wish for enlightenment.

ཉེས་པ་བྱས་པ་ལ་དུག་ཁོང་དུ་སོང་བ་ལྟ་བུའི་འགྲོད་པ་དྲག་པོ་བྱེད་པ་རྣམ་བར་སུན་  
འབྱིན་པའི་སྣོབས།

The power of the destruction here is to feel intense regret about the bad deeds you have done—something like the feeling you would have if you had accidentally swallowed some poison.

སྡིག་པ་འདག་ཕྱིར་དག་བ་གང་བྱས་གཉེན་པོ་ཀུན་ཏུ་སྲོད་པའི་སྣོབས་སུ་གསུངས་པ་  
ལས། སྐབས་འདིར་དོར་སེམས་བསྐྱོམ་བསྐྱེད་ཀྱི་སྣོན་ས་ཡིག་བརྒྱ་བསྐྱེད་པ་གཉེན་པོ་

ཀུན་སྐྱོད་ཀྱི་སློབ་སུ།

It is stated that any good deeds that you undertake to help remove the power of old bad karma constitutes the power of an antidote activity. In this context, reciting the hundred-syllable mantra in the practice of meditation and recitation on the Warrior of Diamond is the power of an antidote activity.

དེ་ལ་བསྐྱབ་བརྟམ་ནས་དུག་གསུངས་པའི་ནང་ནས་ཡིག་བརྒྱ་བཟླ་བ་འདི་གསོལ་  
འདེབས་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་གྲས་སུ་བྱེད།

Remember that there are six different types of antidote activities described in *The Compendium of the Trainings*; reciting the hundred-syllable mantra is counted among what is there referred to as "relying on supplication."

སྐྱེ་ཆད་སློག་ལ་བབས་ཀྱང་སླིག་པའི་ལས་མི་བྱེད་པའི་སློམ་སེམས་བསྟེན་པ་ཉེས་པ་  
ལས་སྐྱར་ལྷོག་པའི་སློབས་ཡིན། བཤགས་པ་བྱེད་སྐབས་འགྲོད་སེམས་དང་སློམ་  
སེམས་སོགས་བསམ་སྐྱོར་ལྷགས་དུག་པོས་བཤགས་པ་བྱས་ན་སླིག་པ་འདག་སློབས་  
ཆེ་ཞིང་། བསམ་སྐྱོར་སོགས་འབྲིང་ཅམ་ལས་མ་བྱུང་ན་སླིག་པའང་འབྲིང་ཅམ་ལས་  
མི་འདག

Relying constantly on a decision to restrain yourself—deciding that, from now on, you will avoid the particular bad deed even at the cost of your life—is here the "power of stopping yourself in the future."

If when you do your practice of purification you maintain a strong sense of regret, and a firm resolve to restrain yourself in the future and so on—that is, if your thoughts and your actions to achieve purification are incredibly sincere—then the power of the purification to eliminate your old bad karmas will be extraordinary. If your thoughts and actions and such in this regard are only of medium intensity, then the purification too will be no more than a medium success.

དེས་ན་སླིག་པ་བཤགས་པ་ལ་འགྲོད་སློམ་ལྷགས་དུག་དང་། རྫོང་སེམས་ལ་ཡིག་

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བརྒྱུའི་སྒོ་ནས་སྡིག་པ་བྱང་བའི་གསོལ་འདེབས་དང་། བདུད་རྩི་འབེབ་སྤྱང་རྣམས་བྱ་  
ཞིང་།

If therefore you really want to purify yourself of these old bad karmas you must learn to reach intense feelings of regret and an intense desire to restrain yourself in the future. You have to ask the holy beings for their help in eliminating the bad deeds, through this practice of the hundred-syllable mantra in the teachings of the Warrior of Diamond. And you must do the practice where the nectar comes down and purifies you.

དེ་ཡང་ལྷའི་ང་རྒྱལ་སྟོན། གསལ་སྤང་མ་སྟོན་པར་འགྲོད་སྟོམ་ལྷགས་དྲག་པོས་  
སྤར་བྱས་ཀྱི་སྡིག་སྡིབ་རྣམས་སྟན་ཐོག་འདི་ག་རང་ལ་སྤྱང་སྟམ་པའི་བསམ་སྦྱོར་  
ཀྱིས་ཡིག་བརྒྱ་གསོལ་འདེབས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་དུ་བཟླ།

At this point by the way you should be loosening up on identifying yourself with the Angel, without however loosening up on your vision of yourself as Her. You have to think, and you have to act, as if every old bad karma that you have ever committed is being eliminated right here, right now, before you rise from this very seat. And thinking this way, recite then the hundred syllables, thinking of them as a supplication to your Lama.

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Master Ngulchu Dharma Bhadra, in his commentary upon the same secret practice, makes similar comments on the importance of the four powers. The following selection is from his *Notes on the Creation and Completion Stages of the Practice of the Angel of Diamond (Vajrayogini)*:

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དེ་ཡང་གཉེན་པོ་སྟོབས་བཞི་ཚང་བ་གལ་ཆེ་ཞིང་དེ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ནང་ནས་ཀྱང་ཕྱིན་ཆད་  
སྟོམ་སེམས་ནི་ཤིན་ཏུ་གལ་ཆེ། དེ་ཡོང་མེན་སྤར་བྱ་ལས་འགྲོད་སེམས་ཡོད་མེད་  
རག་ལས། དེ་ལས་རྒྱ་འབྲས་ལ་ཡིད་ཆེས་ཡོད་མེད་ལ་རག་ལས་ཤིང་།

Now it is essential that all four antidote powers be present. And of these four, it is absolutely essential that you decide to restrain yourself from the particular

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bad deed in the future. Whether or not you are able to make this decision depends on whether or not you have strong feelings of regret about what you've done in the past; and this in turn depends upon whether or not you have a strong conviction in the laws of cause and effect.

ཡོན་ཏན་གོང་དུ་འཕེལ་བ་ལ་སློབ་སློབ་སློབ་དང་། ཚེ་འདི་ལ་བསགས་པ་དང་། ལྷོ་མ་  
གསུམ་གྱི་བཅས་འགལ་དང་། གསང་སྤྲུགས་ཀྱི་དམ་ཚིག་ཉམས་པ་རྣམས་ཕྱི་མ་ཕྱི་  
མ་ཆེས་གོགས་ཆེ་བས་ན་རྒྱ་འབྲས་ལ་ངེས་པ་དང་ས་ནས་བཤགས་སྡོམ་ལ་འབད་  
པར་བྱའོ།།

As for the question of whether or not you will be able to keep moving higher and higher in your spiritual realizations, the following problems create serious obstacles for you, each one more serious than the last: general bad deeds; bad deeds collected in this same life; actions done in contradiction to the rules expressed in the three types of vows; and breaking your tantric vow commitments. As such you should do the very best you can to perceive, clearly, the laws of cause and effect, so that your purification can be most powerful.

སྡོམས་བཞི་ཚང་བའི་སྣོ་ནས་འདུན་པ་དྲག་པོས་སྤངས་ན་སྤོང་ངེས་ཀྱི་ལས་ཀྱང་  
འདག་པར་གསུངས་ཤིང་། ཉིན་རེར་ཡིག་བརྒྱ་ཉེར་གཅིག་རི་ཆག་མེད་དུ་བརྒྱས་ན་  
སློབ་པའི་འཕེལ་ཁ་ཆད་པ་དང་། འབྲུམ་ཕྲག་བརྒྱས་ན་རྩ་རླུང་ཡང་འདག་པ་དང་།  
སྡོན་འགྲོའི་འཁྲིད་ཆེན་བཞི་ཚང་བ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་གནད་ཡོད་པས་གལ་ཆེ་ཞིང་།  
གལ་ཏེ་མ་གྲུབ་ནའང་ཚེ་ག་ཆད་པའི་ཉེས་པ་མེད་དོ།།

It is stated that, if you purify yourself of your old bad karmas with great sincerity, and using all four powers, then you can eliminate even those types of karma that would otherwise be sure to give you a very painful experience. If you can recite the hundred-syllable mantra 21 times a day without missing a day, then it prevents the power of your past karmas from increasing. If you recite the mantra a hundred thousand times, then it can clean from you even the karma of breaking one of your root tantric vows. There is also an extraordinary power from completing the requirements of the four great instructions on the preliminary practices, and so on—there are critical points here that you must come to understand.



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As such, these recitations are extremely important; even if you can't complete these numbers, you must at least be careful to avoid the negative deed of failing to perform the ritual on a continual basis.

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Here then is a final word from Pabongka Rinpoche on the relationship between tantric practice and the four powers. It is taken from his *Collection of Various Notes Taken on the Occasion of an Oral Teaching on Two Books: "The Ocean of Attainments," concerning the Stage of Creation in the Secret Teachings of the King of All Secret Practices, the Glorious Secret Collection (Guhya Samaja); and "The Lamp that Illuminates the Five Stages," on the Stages of Completion in the Same Teachings:*

རྫོང་སེམས་བསྐྱེམ་བཞུས་ཀྱི་ཁུངས་འདི་ཡིན། འབྲུམ་ཕྲག་སྐབས་གྲངས་ཙམ་མིན་  
པར་སྣོབས་བཞི་ཚང་དགོས།

...And this is the ultimate source of the practice of meditation and recitation in the secret teachings of the Warrior of Diamond. When you undertake to do a hundred thousand repetitions of this mantra, you must be careful not to simply see yourself as getting up to a certain number: you must, instead, be sure that all four of the powers are there, complete.

\*\*\*\*\*

This first original English translation  
of the complete detail on the workings of the  
four powers of the purification  
of old bad karmas  
is dedicated to:

the western Buddhist nun Tendzin Konchog,  
who died of lung cancer in Australia  
during this writing;

and Mr. Fred Mizar,  
who is taking his final breaths  
in a hospital in New York,  
practicing this purification,  
as these very words are written

## *The General Confession*

In sadness I say this.

I call on my Lama, the Keeper of the Diamond, and all the rest: the enlightened Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and all the community of pure beings in every corner of the universe. Please hear me.

In this circle of suffering, in an infinite string of lifetimes, from time with no beginning up to the present moment, I, \_\_\_[name]\_\_\_, have come under the power of bad thoughts—the thoughts of wanting, disliking, and ignorance. And so in my body, my speech, and my mind I have done harmful things. I have done the ten non-virtues.

I have done the five great wrongs, and I have done the five which are close to them. I have broken my vows of freedom. I have broken my bodhisattva precepts. I have broken my secret commitments.

I have disrespected my father and mother. I have disrespected the Abbot and the Master who gave me my vows. I have disrespected my fellow disciples.

I have done things to hurt the Three Jewels. I have rejected the holy Dharma. I have belittled the Community of higher beings. I have acted against all living kind.

These and other harmful deeds, a great mountain of mistakes, I have done. I have encouraged others to do them, I have been glad when others did them, and more.

In short, I speak of the entire mass of bad deeds, and the breaking of my vows and commitments, that ever I may have done: all those things which will prevent me from reaching the higher births and freedom itself; all those things which will continue to cause me pain in the circle of suffering.

Here, in the direct presence of my Lama, the Keeper of the Diamond, and all the rest: before the enlightened Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and all the community of pure beings in every corner of the universe, I openly admit the things I have done. I hide nothing from you, I reveal all to you. And I swear that, from this moment on, I will keep myself from all such deeds.

By admitting all, and revealing all, I shall be at peace; but not admitting, and not revealing, I cannot be at peace.

*{The Holy Golden Light, Upali's Sutra, and Dedication's King have been condensed into this exquisite piece known as The General Confession, which is used in Tibetan monasteries to purify negative karma.}*

# ༄༅། །སྤྱི་བཤམས།

## ཡུ་ཏུ་ལགས།

སྒྲ་མ་རྩོམ་ཞི་འཛིན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་སོགས་པ་སྤྱོད་གས་བཅུ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་  
 བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་། དགེ་འདུན་བཅུ་ན་པ་རྣམས་བདག་ལ་  
 དགོངས་སུ་གསོལ།

།བདག་མིང་འདི་ཞེས་བགྱི་བས་ཚེ་རབས་འཁོར་བ་ཐོག་མ་མ་མཆིས་པ་ནས་ད་ལྟ་ལ་  
 ཟུག་གི་བར་དུ། ཉོན་མོངས་པ་འདོད་ཆགས་དང་ཞེ་སྤང་དང་གཉི་སྤྱུག་གི་དབང་གིས་  
 ལུས་ངག་ཡིད་གསུམ་གྱི་སྒོ་ནས་སྤྲིག་པ་མི་དགེ་བ་བཅུ་བགྱིས་པ་དང་།

མཚམས་མ་མཆིས་པ་ལྟ་བགྱིས་པ་དང་། དེ་དང་ཉེ་བ་ལྟ་བགྱིས་པ་དང་། མོ་མོར་  
 ཐར་པའི་སྤོམ་པ་དང་འགལ་བ་དང་། བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའི་བསྐྱབ་པ་དང་འགལ་བ་  
 དང་། གསང་སྤྲུགས་གྱི་དམ་ཚིག་དང་འགལ་བ་དང་།

པ་དང་མ་ལ་མ་གུས་པ་དང་། མཁན་པོ་དང་སློབ་དཔོན་ལ་མ་གུས་པ་དང་། ལྷོགས་  
 ཚངས་པ་མཚུངས་པར་སྤྱོད་པ་རྣམས་ལ་མ་གུས་པ་དང་།

དགོན་མཚོག་གསུམ་ལ་གནོད་པའི་ལས་བགྲིས་པ་དང་། དམ་པའི་ཚོས་སྤངས་པ་  
དང་། འཕགས་པའི་དགོ་འདུན་ལ་སྐྱུར་པ་བཏབ་པ་དང་། སེམས་ཅན་ལ་གནོད་པའི་  
ལས་བགྲིས་པ་ལ་སོགས་པ།

སྒྲིག་པ་མི་དགོ་བའི་ཚོགས་བདག་གིས་བགྲིས་པ་དང་། བགྲིད་དུ་སྐྱུལ་བ་དང་།  
གཞན་གྲིས་བགྲིས་པ་ལ་རྗེས་སུ་ཡི་རང་བ་ལ་སོགས་པ།

མདོར་ན་མཐོ་རིས་དང་ཐར་པའི་གོགས་སུ་གྱུར་ཅིང་འཁོར་བ་དང་ངན་སོང་གི་རྒྱར་  
གྱུར་པའི་ཉེས་སྤང་གི་ཚོགས་ཅི་མཚིས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤྲོ་མ་དོ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་  
སོགས་པ་ཕྱོགས་བཅུ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱུས་དང་བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཐམས་  
ཅད་དང་། དགོ་འདུན་བཅུ་ན་པ་ནམས་ཀྱི་སྐྱུན་སྤར་མཐོལ་ལོ། །མི་འཆབ་བོ།  
།འཆགས་སོ། །སྤྱི་ཆད་སྤོམ་པར་བགྲིད་ལགས་སོ།

།མཐོལ་ཞིང་བཤགས་ན་བདག་བདེ་བ་ལ་རིག་པར་གནས་པར་འགྱུར་གྱི། མ་མཐོལ་  
མ་བཤགས་ན་ནི་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།།



PRACTICE VI

The Four Powers:

How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

*Homework, Class One*

1) Name the original source of the teaching on the four powers; give its author, and his dates. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

2) Name the four powers, following the order of the original source. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

3) *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra* is one of the most important sources used to prove that the four powers really can remove your old bad karma. What does it mean when this sutra says that you can remove even karma which is "committed and collected"?

4) How does Pabongka Rinpoche describe the karma of killing an insect, when this karma is left in the mind stream without purification for the length of 15 days?



PRACTICE VI

The Four Powers:

How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

*Homework, Class Two*

1) The order of the actual practice of the four powers is not the same as the order in the original source. Which power comes first in the order of practice?

2) What are the two practices included in the power of the foundation? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a)

b)

3) Give two reasons for the word "foundation" in the name of the power of the foundation.

4) The Indian master Abhaya Karagupta, some 500 years before Buddhism reached Tibet, described why a very special form of the Wish for enlightenment is effective in the power of the foundation. Name this form of the Wish, and explain why it's effective. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and explain in English.)

5) How does Lord Buddha describe the future of anyone who has committed extremely bad deeds, but who begins to understand emptiness fairly well?

6) What is the basic nature of the "power of destruction"?



PRACTICE VI

The Four Powers:

How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

*Homework, Class Three*

1) Which is the most important of the four powers, and why?

2) What are the "three spheres" in the case where you have yelled back at your boss after he or she yelled at you? (Tibetan track name the three spheres in Tibetan, and then explain in English.)

3) List the six traditional forms of the power of the antidote. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)





PRACTICE VI

The Four Powers:

How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

*Homework, Class Four*

1) Name an important source for the teaching on the power of stopping, and summarize what it says. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and summarize in English.)

2) What does this source say would be a result of stopping in this particular way? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

3) Je Tsongkapa advises us to "be like Katyayana," if we need to be, in following the practice of the power of stopping. Explain this reference.



PRACTICE VI

The Four Powers:

How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

*Homework, Class Five*

1) Name the four karmic results of a bad deed such as killing, and after each one mention which of the four powers is most important for removing it. (Tibetan track give the name of the karmic result in Tibetan, and the rest in English.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

2) Name four of the factors mentioned by the first Changkya Rinpoche (who lived 1642-1714 and who was a former life of Pabongka Rinpoche) and by Pabongka Rinpoche that determine the relative success of your attempts to purify yourself of your old bad karma.

a)

b)

c)

d)

3) What example does this Rinpoche give to support the idea that we can "short-circuit" our bad karmas so that they fail to ever give their expected results?

4) Relate the example of the water and salt.



PRACTICE VI  
The Four Powers:  
How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

*Quiz, Class One*

1) Name the four powers, following the order of the original source. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

2) How does Pabongka Rinpoche describe the karma of killing an insect, when this karma is left in the mind stream without purification for the length of 15 days?



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*Quiz, Class Two*

1) What are the two practices included in the power of the foundation? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a)

b)

2) The Indian master Abhaya Karagupta, some 500 years before Buddhism reached Tibet, described why a very special form of the Wish for enlightenment is effective in the power of the foundation. Name this form of the Wish, and explain why it's effective. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and explain in English.)

3) What is the basic nature of the "power of destruction"?



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*Quiz, Class Three*

1) Which is the most important of the four powers, and why?

2) List the six traditional forms of the power of the antidote. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)



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*Quiz, Class Four*

1) Name an important source for the teaching on the power of stopping, and summarize what it says. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and summarize in English.)

2) What does this source say would be a result of stopping in this particular way? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)



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*Quiz, Class Five*

1) Name the four karmic results of a bad deed such as killing, and after each one mention which of the four powers is most important for removing it. (Tibetan track give the name of the karmic result in Tibetan, and the rest in English.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

2) Name four of the factors mentioned by the first Changkya Rinpoche (who lived 1642-1714 and who was a former life of Pabongka Rinpoche) and by Pabongka Rinpoche that determine the relative success of your attempts to purify yourself of your old bad karma.

a)

b)

c)

d)





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*Answer Key, Class One*

1) Name the original source of the teaching on the four powers; give its author, and his dates. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**The original source of the teaching is a sutra by Lord Buddha himself (500 BC) called *The Teaching on the Four Practices*.**

ཚཱ་བཞི་བསྐྱེད་པའི་མདོ།

*chu shi tenpay do*

2) Name the four powers, following the order of the original source. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) The power of destruction.

སུན་འབྱིན་པའི་སྣོབ་ས།

*sunjinpai top*

b) The power of the antidote.

གཉེན་པོའི་སྣོབ་ས།

*nyenpoi top*

c) The power of stopping.

སླར་ལྲོག་པའི་སྣོབ་ས།

*larndokpai top*

**d) The power of the foundation.**

ཏེན་གྱི་སྒྲོབ་ས།

*ten gyi top*

3) *The Diamond-Cutter Sutra* is one of the most important sources used to prove that the four powers really can remove your old bad karma. What does it mean when this sutra says that you can remove even karma which is "committed and collected"?

**This phrase in the sutra refers to a kind of karma called "certain to lead to the experience of a result." This refers to very serious actions such as the five "immediate" deeds. The point is that, if purification can remove even these very serious karmas, then needless to say it can remove lesser karmas.**

4) How does Pabongka Rinpoche describe the karma of killing an insect, when this karma is left in the mind stream without purification for the length of 15 days?

**He says, since the power of karma doubles every 24 hours, then the unpurified karma of killing one insect becomes—within 15 days—equivalent to the karma of killing more than 16,000 insects, or "just about the karma of killing a human."**



PRACTICE VI

The Four Powers:

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*Answer Key, Class Two*

1) The order of the actual practice of the four powers is not the same as the order in the original source. Which power comes first in the order of practice?

**The power of the foundation comes first, as noted by Je Tsongkapa, since it makes more sense first to "ground" ourselves for the practice of purification.**

2) What are the two practices included in the power of the foundation? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Taking refuge in the Three Jewels.

སྐབས་འགྲོ

*kyamdro*

b) Developing the Wish for enlightenment, or bodhichitta

སེམས་བསྐྱེད།

*semkye*

3) Give two reasons for the word "foundation" in the name of the power of the foundation.

**When you fall down (here by committing a bad deed), you have to have some solid ground below you to prop yourself back up again. And the two practices just mentioned are the foundation of the entire Buddhist path. Secondly, our bad deeds are "founded" or "based" or committed against two separate parties: the Buddhas, and other unenlightened beings. Taking refuge makes up for our offense against the enlightened beings; developing the Wish for enlightenment does the same for the unenlightened beings.**

4) The Indian master Abhaya Karagupta, some 500 years before Buddhism reached Tibet, described why a very special form of the Wish for enlightenment is effective in the power of the foundation. Name this form of the Wish, and explain why it's effective. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and explain in English.)

**Master Abhaya Karagupta is referring to the "ultimate" Wish for enlightenment, which is actually just another name for the direct perception of emptiness. He quotes a number of sutras to prove that understanding emptiness removes immense amounts of negative deeds.**

དོན་དམ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད།

*dundam semkye*

5) How does Lord Buddha describe the future of anyone who has committed extremely bad deeds, but who begins to understand emptiness fairly well?

**He states, in *The Sutra in the Secrets of the Ones Gone Thus*: "I do not say, o Protector of Light, that such a person would ever go to the lower realms."**

6) What is the basic nature of the "power of destruction"?

**It is the intelligent regret of a well-educated Buddhist who clearly understands the ramifications of collecting even a very minor karma.**



PRACTICE VI

The Four Powers:

How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

*Answer Key, Class Three*

1) Which is the most important of the four powers, and why?

**The most important of the four is the power of the antidote; and this is because the most effective antidote is understanding the emptiness of any given situation, and more particularly the emptiness of the "three spheres" of the bad deed we have committed. This understanding will liberate us from repeating any bad deeds, and eventually lead us to nirvana and enlightenment.**

2) What are the "three spheres" in the case where you have yelled back at your boss after he or she yelled at you? (Tibetan track name the three spheres in Tibetan, and then explain in English.)

**The three spheres are the "yeller" (me); the "yellee" (my boss); and the yelling itself. Each one is only a perception towards an empty screen forced upon me by my past karma.**

འཁོར་གསུམ།

*korsum*

3) List the six traditional forms of the power of the antidote. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Study profound scriptures.

མདོ་སྡི་ཟབ་མོ་ལ་བརྟེན།

*dode sabmo la ten*

b) Take an intense interest in emptiness.

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ལ་མོས།

*tongpanyi la mu*

c) Recite secret mantras.

གསང་སྒྲགས་བཟླས་པ།

*sang-ngak depa*

d) Make images of holy beings.

སྐྱ་གཟུགས་བྱེད་པ།

*ku-suk chepa*

e) Make offerings to the Buddhas.

སངས་རྒྱལ་ལ་མཚོད་པ།

*sanggye la chupa*

f) Keep the names of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

སངས་རྒྱལ་དང་བྱུང་སེམས་མཚན་འཛིན།

*sanggye dang jangsem tsen dzin*



PRACTICE VI

The Four Powers:

How to Get Rid of Your Old Bad Karma

*Answer Key, Class Four*

1) Name an important source for the teaching on the power of stopping, and summarize what it says. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and summarize in English.)

**The source is *The Sutra of Kshitigarbha*, which states that giving up the act of taking life "destroys all the obstacles from the act of killing that you've carried in your mind for beginningless time."**

སའི་སྣོང་པོའི་མདོ།

*saiy nyingpoy do*

2) What does this source say would be a result of stopping in this particular way? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**The result of giving up the taking of life would be that "you stop ever becoming sick, and your life becomes longer."**

ནད་མེད་ཅིང་ཚེ་རིང་བ།

*neme ching tse ringwa*

3) Je Tsongkapa advises us to "be like Katyayana," if we need to be, in following the practice of the power of stopping. Explain this reference.

**Katyayana was a disciple of Lord Buddha who saw emptiness directly and became an "arya" or realized being. In a past life, however, he was a butcher. He agreed to promise to stop taking life, but found that he could not do so all together; he compromised then, taking and keeping a vow not to kill living creatures at night, but continuing to kill them during the day.**



PRACTICE VI

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*Answer Key, Class Five*

1) Name the four karmic results of a bad deed such as killing, and after each one mention which of the four powers is most important for removing it. (Tibetan track give the name of the karmic result in Tibetan, and the rest in English.)

- a) **Environmental result: food and medicine in your world have very little potency; removed mainly by power of the foundation.**

བདག་འབྲས།

*dak dre*

- b) **Similar experience: you have a short life or are often sick; removed mainly by power of destruction.**

སྟོང་བ་རྒྱ་མཐུག།

*nyongwa gyu tun*

- c) **Similar habit: in many future lives you enjoy killing; removed mainly by power of stopping.**

བྱེད་པ་རྒྱ་མཐུག།

*chepa gyu tun*

- d) **Rebirth result: serious killing leads to hell rebirth, medium killing leads to birth as a craving spirit, and lesser killing leads to birth as an animal; removed mainly by power of the antidote.**

ནམ་སྒྲིག།

*nammin*



2) Name four of the factors mentioned by the first Changkya Rinpoche (who lived 1642-1714 and who was a former life of Pabongka Rinpoche) and by Pabongka Rinpoche that determine the relative success of your attempts to purify yourself of your old bad karma.

- a) **Whether or not you use all four of the powers, or just some of them.**
- b) **Whether you perform the powers with fierce motivation or not.**
- c) **How long or how many times you repeat the four powers.**
- d) **How powerful spiritually the person doing the purification is.**

3) What example does this Rinpoche give to support the idea that we can "short-circuit" our bad karmas so that they fail to ever give their expected results?

**He gives the example of how wrong views and episodes of anger can prevent our *good* karmic seeds from ripening properly too.**

4) Relate the example of the water and salt.

**No one could drink a glass of water with a lot of salt in it, but it would be all right to drink from a large tank with the same amount of salt. A person who has a lot of good karmic seeds has a lesser chance of taking a lower rebirth from the same amount of bad karma that takes a lesser person to a lower rebirth.**

**The Asian Classics Institute**  
**Practice VI: The Four Powers, How to Get Rid of**  
**Your old Bad Karma**

**Supplement: Fire Purification Instructions**

*The Kit*



Practice VI: The Four Powers  
Supplement: Fire Purification Instructions

**The Kit:**

1) You need a container to make the fire in: a used tea tin, flower pot, or some other such container. Poke or drill holes in the container so that air can feed the fire.



2) Place the container on or in a dish (one can also put out aluminum foil or place it on a cement slab). The seeds can pop out when the fire really gets going, so protect the surrounding area.

3) You will need black sesame seeds which you will visualize putting your mental afflictions into, and/or black mustard seeds which you visualize putting all your obstacles into. You can buy them at health food stores or Indian shops.



4) You will need a bottle of ghee (clarified butter) or vegetable shortening.



To make ghee yourself, use unsalted butter. It is purer, and salt inhibits burning. In a **microwave**: place 1 pound of butter in a bowl in the microwave for 3-4 minutes. Stir, and then heat for another 3-4 minutes. The butter will then separate. Or, for **stovetop**: place the butter in a thick bottomed pan on a *very low* temperature. Boil for about 45 minutes, letting the butter separate.

A kind of scum will form on the top of the butter. Scoop the scum off with a spoon. Strain the remaining liquid through a tea strainer into a jar. Any remaining scum will catch in the tea strainer, and the clarified butter will end up in the jar. Do not pour out what remains on the bottom of the pan. This is the curd, and it will pass through the strainer and ruin the ghee.

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5) Matches. Wooden matches work best as you use them for starter fuel for the seeds and the ghee which go in the fire container.



6) A pencil and paper for writing down your mental afflictions, especially the really nasty one or ones you are concentrating on. Write it down, wad it up, and place it in the fire. As it burns, it purifies that specific bad deed or problem.



7) A cloth or container to place the fire container in after you are finished to keep everything else clean.



8) A spoon to scoop the ghee.



### **How to Conduct the Fire Ritual**

1) Sit for a few minutes and do a short breath meditation to balance and focus the mind on what you're going to do. Take refuge and generate bodhichitta just as when beginning a meditation. It is better if you can focus your mind on what you are doing instead of sitting down and popping some ghee in a can and setting it on fire without awareness.



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**Supplement: Fire Purification Instructions**

After taking refuge and generating bodhichitta,

- 2) Put about one heaping tablespoon of ghee in the bottom of the can, spreading it out so that it will not smother and drown the matches.



- 3) Take the seeds and put them in your hand, holding them at your heart and visualize whatever you are working on, such as "I'm really critical." Or more specifically perhaps, criticizing your Dharma brothers and sisters. Try to remember all the specific times that you've done this in the last 24 hours. Try to be very specific. Think about where you were, who the other person was, what they were doing, what time of day was it. What exactly the thoughts were in your mind. Visualize them clearly and gather them as blackness in your heart. Using your breath, breathe the thoughts into the seeds. You do this by inhaling and then on your out breath through your nostrils, imagine all the blackness coming out of you on your breath through your nose and into the seeds. Don't leave any inside of you. It may take a few breaths, sometimes it feels like it doesn't want to come out. Make sure it is all in your hand. The seeds should begin to feel heavy, or gross, because your mental afflictions are in there. Feel a strong conviction that all those affliction and negativities are in the seeds.



- 4) Then dump the seeds into the container, on top of the ghee. Make sure they land on the ghee.



- 5) Before you light it take a moment to think about whatever understanding of emptiness you have, however tiny it may be and bring it to mind. Then using a lit match as a symbol of your understanding of emptiness, drop it into the container.



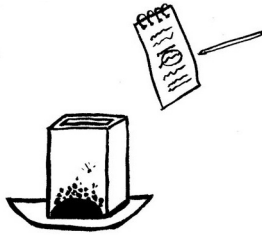
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Drop in five to six more matches, always keeping emptiness in mind. Try to criss-cross the matches so you will get a nice small fire going. While you are doing this think of the different ways in which you understand how emptiness helps to overcome and destroy your mental afflictions.

If the ghee was hard at first it will start to melt, and the seeds will start to sizzle like in a frying pan. If you use too much ghee it will drown the matches. When it gets going well the seeds will start to pop a little bit. Be careful because the seeds may fly out.

When the fire's going a little bit, think about yesterday -- just quickly call it to mind. Whatever the deed was, call it to mind and put it into more of the seeds and then drop them in. Then do the day before, then last week, and then last month. Last month is kind of fuzzy, but still do all the times last month. Then do last year. All the times you criticized or behaved in a judgmental way toward other people. After that try to think about all the tendencies in your mind to do it. What we would call the latent seeds in your mind. Just think about them and put them in the can. This way you can get rid of all your tendencies to even think that way. Try to get rid of any and every little speck of possibility of doing that bad deed again.

If you have a really specific problem you can write it down on a piece of paper.



If you have to put a person's name, circle it because you don't want to burn a person's name. Especially if you are having a mental affliction toward your lama, you don't want to write your lama's name down, then crumple it up and put it on the fire. Put a circle around it, and then it's symbolizing you're not burning it, it is something exempt.

Write down whatever the problem is, crumple it up nicely so it will burn and put it on the fire. Have some conviction in your heart that you are burning that negative deed, that negative way of thinking, or that habit. You are actually destroying it. Think that you know this is symbolic, "this is my mental affliction and it's burning right now. For the moment I am not going to be weighted by it, I'm not going to be controlled by it any longer, I am free of it." If you have major mental afflictions, just doing this once is not enough. You need to do many, many fire rituals (*pujas*). You can do them every day for a month, or three months, and at the end have a really special one, a celebratory fire *puja*. Make this final purification ceremony special.

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When you have completed this final *puja*, think that all the negative karma is finished. Feel, "okay, that's finished, I finished it!"

It's good to try and really focus on a theme. For instance if you are having problems with stinginess, with practicing generosity, and you don't want to be stingy. You can write down your overall problem with generosity, crumple it up, and then throw it in there. You can also write down one specific thing, one habit. Try to keep the theme and not get too distracted and say "Oh yeah, I did this, and oh yeah, I did that other thing too," focusing on different ideas. There are 84,000 negative habits and you could spend a whole month going all over the place.

This practice comes from Kedrup Je, one of Lama Tsongkapa's disciples. The black seeds are from Kedrup Je's tradition symbolizing your bad deeds, *pakpa*. They have been used for maybe two and a half thousand years as a symbol for your mental afflictions. The paper is new and more specific, good for one very specific thing, one very specific issue, maybe a deeper problem.

[Based on a presentation by Elizabeth Heimburg during *The Four Powers of Purification*, taught by Geshe Michael Roach at Vajrapani Institute in Boulder Creek California on October 30, 1999. The text has been lightly edited. May these instructions serve to free all beings from suffering, and bring all to full enlightenment.]

**Geshe Michael Roach on the mantra associated with the Fire Offering**

Geshela: I would do the mantra in connection with the fire offering and I would do the fire offering maybe once a week on your day off, like on Sunday or Saturday. We used to go to the beach and do it. We would have a nice picnic, and everybody would do their fire thing. I want to say one thing about the fire thing. This is one of those things that great lamas do because they know it's more fun to sit and make a fire than to try and meditate for ten minutes. Really, I'm not kidding. Sit there and go into a reverie; sit there and stare at the flame, just letting your mind go. It's an excuse to be quiet for 15-20 minutes. There's something about a flame that's irresistible. You watch the flame, especially on a beach at night or something like that, just watch the flame and then do a real slow Four Powers. And there's something about the flame that holds your attention better than just sitting at home on your bed and trying to meditate. I find it very relaxing and very cleansing. It is said that it's very, very important at the end to say "OK that's over with," especially if you're going to die. If you're close to dying, it's important to go through the Four Powers on all the bad things you ever did to anybody and say "that's over." "I'm over that," and decide that it's finished.

Mantra: *Om vajra daka kaka kahi kaahi sarwa papam dahana basmim kuru soha*

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A mantra works if two things are present: The Buddha wrote it (so that one's okay), and you have to be keeping your vows. You have to be at least trying to keep your vow book, or it doesn't work.

The guts of the mantra is here: *Sarwa* means all, *papam* means bad deeds, *dhana basmim* means purified, *kuru* means I do, *daka* is referring to the deity, like your guardian angel. That's enough, we don't translate the whole thing.

It is good to repeat the mantra every time you throw in some seeds.

(Student) Can you also do it with your rosary?

Geshela: You can also do it on your rosary, but technically we often do it as we're throwing seeds in. Then you go burn up all your bad karmas. It's a cool practice. I think it's not taught enough, or taught clearly enough. So now you have it, and you should teach it to other people too.





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