

THE SEVEN POINTS OF MIND TRAINING

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These seven points and 59 slogans are part of what are called the Lojong or mind-training teachings. I consider them to be (along with “The Four Thoughts That Turn the Mind to the Dharma”) the quintessential teachings for any beginning (or advanced) dharma student. They certainly helped to change my life.

These points and slogans were composed by Chekawa Yeshe Dorje (1102-1176) and have been celebrated ever since. In my own entry into the dharma, they were essential in bringing home and making clear to me certain very important concepts.

I did manage to learn to read Tibetan and, armed with a stack of dictionaries, tried to translate... for a while. It became obvious to me that it would take many years of study to become very good at it. LOL. I was not willing to spend that kind of time, so I took another approach.

As a dharma student trying to understand the rudiments of the preliminary practices, I find it helpful to examine different translations from Tibetan into English to see how they differ and they do differ to a marked degree. I did my best to compare what translations of “The Seven Points of Mind Training” as I could find to see where they differ and where translators find their differences. It helps a lot to grasp the gist of each slogan.

There are a great many translations readily available online for comparison. I have gathered a few together here so that we can compare. I found the Western lama Ken McLeod to be very dedicated to sharing this particular information and, early-on, McLeod's book "The Great Path of Awakening" (which covers these slogans) was (and still is) one of my most treasured dharma books. We invited McLeod to our dharma center to teach. It was great to be with someone who totally cares about these slogans and had done as much to share them as McLeod has. If you don't have his book, it is invaluable IMO. One needs to read the commentaries and related materials. Here it is:

The Great Path of Awakening (translator Ken McLeod)

https://www.amazon.com/Great-Path-Awakening-Cultivating-Compassion/dp/1590302141/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1530710631&sr=1-1&keywords=great+path+of+awakening

Another, equally good, translation is this one:

"Training the Mind" (translator Chögyam Trungpa)

https://www.amazon.com/Training-Cultivating-Loving-Kindness-Chogyam-Trungpa/dp/1590300513/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1530710816&sr=1-1&keywords=trungpa+training+the+mind

TRIANGULATING TRANSLATIONS

Here are the Seven Points of Mind Training (59 slogans) in different translations. By reading them against one another, I can usually pull out the main meaning or gist of each slogan. Give it a shot. And do search out the entire teachings (and books), which are not presented here.

Point One: Preliminaries Which Are A Basis For Dharma Practice.

#1

First, train in the Preliminaries. (T, NT, G)

First, learn the preliminaries. (M, KM)

First train in all the preliminary practices. (SF)

Point Two: The Main Practice, Which is Training in Bodhicitta.

#2

Regard all dharmas as dreams. (NT)

All dharmas should be regarded as dreams.(T)

Think that all phenomena are like dreams. (M)

Regard all phenomenon as dreams. (KM)

Consider all dharmas to be like a dream. (G)

Consider all phenomena as a dream. (SF)

#3

Contemplate the nature of unborn insight (T)

Examine the nature of unborn awareness. (M, KM, NT, SF)

Examine the nature of the unborn mind. (G)

#4

Self-liberate the antidote (T, NT)

Let even the remedy itself go free on its own. (M)

Even the remedy is freed to subside naturally. (KM)

The opponent itself (is free) on its own ground. (G)
The remedy itself is released in its own place. (SF)

#5

Rest in the nature of alaya, the essence. (NT)
Rest in the nature of alaya (T)
Settle in the nature of basic cognition, the essence.
(M)
Rest in the nature of all, the basis of everything. (KM)
Place the essence of the path in the state of the
foundation of all. (G)
Place (your meditation) on the nature of the
foundation of all: the essence (of the path). (SF)

#6

In post-meditation, be a child of illusion. (NT)
In the post-meditation experience,
One should become a child of illusion. (T)
Between sessions, consider phenomena as
phantoms.(M)
In the post-meditation practice,
Be a child of illusion. (KM)
In the meditation break, be a creator of illusion. (SF)

#7

Sending and taking should be practiced alternately.
These two should ride the breath. (NT)
Sending and taking should be practiced alternately.
That alternation should be put on the medium of the
breath. (T)
Train in joining sending and taking together. Do this
by riding the breath. (M)
Train in taking and sending alternately. (KM)
Practice interwoven giving and taking.
Ride upon the moving breath. (G)
Practice a combination of both giving and taking.

Commence taking progressively from your own side.
Place these two astride the breath. (SF)

#8

Three objects, three poisons, and three seeds of
virtue. (NT)

Three objects, three poisons, and three virtuous
seeds. (T)

Three objects, three poisons, three bases of virtue.
(M)

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

Practice on the three objects, three poisons and three
roots of virtue. (G)

There are three objects, three poisons,
And three sources of virtue. (SF)

#9

In all activities, train with slogans. (NT)

Train with these sayings in all activities. (T)

Train with phrases in every mode of behavior. (M)

Use sayings to train in all forms of activity. (KM)

In order to remember this,

Recite it in words throughout all activities. (G)

Practice every activity by these words. (SF)

#10

Begin the sequence of sending and taking with
yourself. (NT)

The sequence of exchange begins with oneself. (T)

Begin the development of taking with yourself. (M)

Begin the sequence of exchange with yourself. (KM)

Begin taking with yourself. (G)

Commence taking progressively from your own side.
(SF)

Point Three: Carrying Whatever Occurs in Your Life Onto the Path

#11

When the world is filled with evil,

Transform all mishaps into the path of Bodhi. (NT)

When the world is filled with evil,

All mishaps should be transformed into the path of bodhi. (T)

When evils fills the inanimate and animate universes, change bad conditions to the Bodhi Path. (M)

When evils fills the world and its inhabitants, change adverse conditions into the path of awakening. (KM)

When the world and its beings are evil, transform the negative conditions into aids on the path of enlightenment. (G)

When the container and the contents are filled with evil, change this adverse circumstance into the path to full awakening. (SF)

#12

Drive all blames into one. (NT, M, KM)

Drive all blames onto oneself. (T)

Place all the blame on one thing alone. (G)

Banish the one object of every blame. (SF)

#13

Be grateful to everyone. (T, NT, M, KM)

And meditate on kindness to all. (G)

Meditate on the great kindness of all. (SF)

#14

Seeing confusion as the four kayas is unsurpassable shunyata protection. (NT)

Seeing confusion as the four kayas is supreme shunyata protection. (T)

The unsurpassable protection of emptiness is to see the manifestations of bewilderment as the four kayas. (M)

To see confusion as the four kayas,

The protection of emptiness is unsurpassable. (KM)

Meditate that all confused appearances are the four Buddha-kayas. The best guardian is emptiness. (G)

#15

Four practices are the best of methods. (NT)

Four applications are the best method. (T)

An excellent means is to have the four provisions. (M)

The four applications are the best method. (KM)

Having the four activities is the supreme method. (G)

Possess the four preparations, the highest of means. (SF)

#16

Whatever you meet unexpectedly,

Join with meditation. (NT)

In order to inspire unexpected bad circumstances onto the path, whatever you meet should be joined immediately with meditation. (T)

In order to bring any situation to the path quickly,

As soon as it is met, join it with meditation. (M)

In order to take unexpected conditions as the path, immediately join whatever you meet with meditation. (KM)

Meditate on whatever occurs. (G)

Utilize every immediate circumstance for meditation.

Point Four: Bodhicitta Practice in Life and Death.

#17

Practice the five strengths,

The condensed heart instructions. (NT)

The synopsis of the essence instruction is contained in the five strengths. (T)

The concise epitome of heart instruction: work with 'Five Forces'. (M)

A summary of the essential instructions, train in the five forces. (KM)

The essence of this teaching abbreviates into the application of the five powers. (G)

Gather together the abridged quintessence of this advice. Blend the practice of one life with the five forces. (SF)

#18

The mahayana instruction for ejection of consciousness at death is the five strengths: how you conduct yourself is important. (NT)

The instruction for how to die in mahayana is the five strengths. Therefore, one should practice them. (T)

The instructions for transference in the Mahayana are the "Five Forces". Behavior is important. (M)

The mahayana instructions for how to die are the five forces. How you act is important. (KM)

The Mahayana precept of transmigration lies in these five powers. And cherish the death posture. (G)

The instruction for the great vehicle transmigration of consciousness is to apply those very five forces, lying in the perfect position. (SF)

Point Five: Evaluation of Mind Training

#19

All dharma agrees at one point. (T, NT)

The purpose of all Dharma is contained in one point. (M)

All Dharma has a single purpose. (KM)

All dharmas condense into one theme. (G)

All Dharma collects into one intention. (SF)

#20

Of the two witnesses, hold the principal one. (NT)

Of the two judges, hold the principal one. (T)

Grasp the principal of two witnesses. (M)

Of the two judges, rely on the principal one. (KM)

Hold to the chief of the two witnesses. (G)

Retain the two witnesses of foremost importance.

#21

Always maintain only a joyful mind. (NT)

Continuously apply only a joyful mind. (T)

Always rely on just a happy frame of mind. (M)

Always have the support of a joyful mind. (KM)

The mind constantly relies upon joy alone. (G)

One is always accompanied by only joyful thoughts.

(SF)

#22

If you can practice even when distracted,

You are well trained. (NT)

You are well trained if you can practice even when
distracted. (T)

Even though you are distracted, if you can do it, it is
still mind training. (M)

You are proficient if you can practice even when
disturbed. (KM)

If there is ability even when wandering, this is a sign
of progress. (G)

One is trained if one is capable, although distracted.

(SF)

Point Six: Ethics of Mind Training

#23

Always abide by the three basic principles. (NT)

Practice the three basic principles. (T)

Always observe the three general points. (M)

Always practice the three general principles. (KM)

Constantly train in the three general points. (G)

Always practice the three general points. (SF)

#24

Change your attitude and relax as it is. (T)

Change your inclination and then maintain it. (M)

Change your attitude, but remain natural. (KM, NT)

Change your attitude while remaining natural. (SF)

#25

Don't talk about injured limbs. (NT)

Do not proclaim about injured limbs. (T)

Do not discuss defects. (M)

Do not talk about weak points. (KM)

Do not speak about weakened limbs. (G)

Speak not of the shortcomings of others. (SF)

#26

Don't ponder others. (NT)

Do not ponder others' weak points. (T)

Don't think about anything that concerns others. (M)

Don't think about the affairs of others. (KM)

Do not judge others. (G)

Think not about whatever is seen in others. (SF)

#27

Work with the greater defilement first. (NT)

Work through the greater defilement first. (T)

Train first against the defilement that is greatest. (M)

Work on the stronger disturbing emotions first. (KM)

Purify the strongest delusion first. (G)

Purify first whichever affliction is heaviest. (SF)

#28

- Abandon any hope of fruition. (NT)
- Give up any possibilities of fruition. (T)
- Abandon all hopes of results. (M)
- Give up all hope for results. (KM)
- Abandon all expectations. (G)
- Give up all hope of reward. (SF)

#29

- Refrain from poisonous food. (T)
- Abandon poisoned food. (M)
- Give up poisonous food. (KM)
- Avoid food mixed with poison. (G)
- Abandon poisonous food. (SF, NT)

#30

- Don't be so predictable. (NT)
- Don't be predictable and Guileless. (T)
- Don't be consistent. (M)
- Don't rely on being consistent. (KM)
- Do not be lenient toward the wrong object. (G)
- Do not serve the central object leniently. (SF)

#31

- Don't malign others. (NT)
- Do not disparage people. (T)
- Don't make wicked jokes. (M)
- Don't be excited by cutting remarks. (KM)
- Do not mock weakness. (G)
- Be indifferent towards malicious jokes. (SF)

#32

- Don't wait in ambush. (T, NT, KM)
- Don't wait for an opportunity. (M)
- Do not lie in ambush. (SF)

#33

- Don't bring things to a painful point. (T, NT)
- Don't strike at the heart. (M)
- Don't make things painful. (KM)
- Do not strike sensitive areas. (G)
- Never strike at the heart. (SF)

#34

- Don't transfer the ox's load to the cow. (T, NT)
- Don't transfer the cow's load to the bull. (M)
- Don't put the horse's load on a pony. (KM)
- Do not put the load of a dzo on a bullock. (G)
- Do not load an ox with the load of a dzo. (SF)

#35

- Don't try to be fastest. (NT)
- Don't sharpen your competitiveness. (T)
- Don't back the favorite. (M)
- Don't aim to win. (KM)
- Do not hurry. (G)
- Do not compete by a last-minute sprint. (SF)

#36

- Don't act with a twist. (T, NT)
- Don't have wrong views. (M)
- Don't revert to magic. (KM)
- Do not be treacherous. (SF)

#37

- Don't make gods into demons. (NT)
- Don't bring down gods into demons. (T)
- Don't fall for the celestial demon. (M)
- Don't reduce a god to a demon. (KM)
- Do not turn a god into a devil. (G)
- Do not bring a god down to a devil. (SF)

#38

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

Don't seek others' pain as the limbs of one's own happiness. (T)

Don't seek sorrow for spurious comforts. (M)

Don't seek pain as a component of happiness. (KM)

Do not rejoice in sorrow. (G)

Do not inflict misery for possession of happiness. (SF)

Point Seven: Guidelines Of Mind Training

#39

All activities should be done with one intention. (NT)

All activities should be done with one attitude. (T)

All absorption are effected in one. (M)

All active meditation is done in one way. (KM)

Practice all yogas in one manner. (G)

Practice all yogas (or activities) by one. (SF)

#40

Correct all wrongs with one intention. (NT)

All suppression of perversion should be done with one attitude. (T)

One method will correct all wrong. (M)

All corrections are made in one way. (KM)

Face all discouragement in one manner. (G)

Practice every suppression of interference by one. (SF)

#41

Two activities: one at the beginning, one at the end. (T, NT)

At the beginning and at the end, there are two things to do. (M)

At the beginning and at the end, two things to be done. (KM)

Engage two practices: One at the beginning and one at the end. (G)

There are two duties: at the beginning and the end. (SF)

#42

Whichever of the two occurs, be patient. (NT)

Whichever of the two occurs, it should be resolved into patience. (T)

Be patient, whichever of the two occurs. (M)

Whichever of the two occurs, be patient.

Maintain patience for both. (G)

Endure whichever situation arises, either (good or bad). (SF)

#43

Observe these two, even at the risk of your life. (T, NT)

Observe two precepts even at the risk of life. (M)

Observe these two, even at the risk of your life. (KM)

Guard two things like you would your life. (G)

Guard both points more previously than your life. (SF)

#44

Train in the three difficulties (NT)

Practice the three difficulties. (T)

Learn the three difficulties. (M)

Learn the three difficult points. (KM)

Train in the three difficult practices. (G)

Practice the three hardships. (SF)

#45

Take on the three principal causes. (NT)

Practice the three leading points of cause. (T)

Seven Points of Mind Training

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Take up the three parts of the principal cause. (M)

Take up the three primary resources. (KM)

Cultivate the three principal causes. (G)

Attain the three principle causes. (SF)

#46

Pay heed that the three never wane. (NT)
Practice the three minds that won't diminish. (T)
Meditate on the three things not to be destroyed. (M)
Don't allow three points to weaken. (KM)
Meditate on the three unmitigated qualities. (G)
Meditate on the three undeclining attitudes. (SF)

#47

Keep the three inseparable. (NT)
One should have the three inseparables. (T)
Make the three inseparable from virtue. (M)
Make the three inseparable. (KM)
Possess the three inseparables. (G)
Possess the three inseparables. (SF)

#48

Train without bias in all areas.
It is crucial always to do this pervasively and wholeheartedly. (NT)
Train impartially in all areas. Always do this thoroughly -- pervading everywhere. (T)
Train impartially in every area; it's important to have trained deeply and pervasively in everything. (M)
Train in all areas without partiality. Overall deep and pervasive proficiency is important. (KM)
Practice without bias toward the objects. (G)
Always practice with pure impartiality on all objects.
Cherish the in-depth and broad application of all skills. (SF)

#49

Always meditate on whatever provokes resentment. (NT)
Always meditate. especially on your sore points. (T)
Always meditate on specific objects. (M)

Always meditate on volatile points. (KM) Constantly practice on special cases. (G)

Always meditate on those closely related. (SF)

#50

Don't be swayed by external circumstances. (NT)

You should not depend on external conditions. (T)

You should have no concern for other factors. (M)

Don't depend on external conditions. (KM)

Do not rely upon external conditions. (G)

Depend not upon other circumstances. (SF)

#51

This time, practice the main points. (NT)

This time, practice the main point. (T)

Therefore, apply yourself to other factors. (M)

This time, practice the important points. (KM)

Immediately accomplish what is important. (G)

Exert yourself, especially at this time. (SF)

#52

Don't misinterpret. (T, NT))

Don't do things backwards. (M)

Don't make mistakes. (KM)

Avoid wrong understanding. (G)

Do not follow inverted deeds. (SF)

#53

Don't fluctuate. (T)

Don't vacillate. (M, NT))

Don't fluctuate. (KM)

Do not practice with irregularity. (G)

Do not be erratic. (SF)

#54

Train wholeheartedly. (T, NT)

Train as though cut off. (M)
Train whole-heartedly. (KM)
Practice with confidence. (G)
Do not underestimate your ability. (SF)

#55

Liberate yourself by examining and analyzing. (NT)
You should liberate yourself by examining and studying. (T)
You should find freedom by means of both examination and investigation. (M)
Find freedom through both examination and investigation. (KM)
Think deeply with insight and analysis. (G)
Be liberated by two: examination and analysis. (SF)

#56

Don't wallow in self-pity. (T, NT)
Don't brag. (M)
Don't wallow in self-esteem (KM)
Do not become familiar with vanity. (G)
Do not be boastful. (SF)

#57

Don't be jealous. (T, NT)
Don't be consumed by jealousy. (M)
Don't be caught up in irritation. (KM)
Do not respond with arrogance. (G)
Do not retaliate. (SF)

#58

Don't be frivolous. (NT)
Don't act with fickleness. (T)
Don't act capriciously. (M)
Don't be temperamental. (KM)
Do not be inconsistent. (G)

Do not be fickle. (SF)

#59

Don't expect applause. (NT)

Don't expect more. (T)

Don't expect thanks. (M, KM)

Have no expectations. (G)

Do not wish for gratitude. (SF)

Note:

(M)= McLeod translation,

(KM)= 2nd McLeod translation,

(G)= Glenn H. Mullin translation,

(T)= Trungpa translation,

(SF)= *Advice from a Spiritual Friend*,

(NT)= Trungpa from *Training the Mind*.

Assembled for comparison and discussion by Michael Erlewine