



༄༅། བློ་སྦྱོང་ལམ་གྱི་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་བཟུངས་སོ། །

## The Eightfold Supreme Path of Mind Training

*based on the instructions by Arya Atisha,  
compiled by Phakchok Rinpoche*

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ལྡོ གང་མིར་བརེ་ཉིད་རལ་བའི་ལོ་ཐོག་ཕུན་ཚོགས་འདིའི། །  
ས་བོན་དང་ནི་སེལ་ལ་རྒྱར་འད་ཡུན་རིང་ད། །  
ལོངས་སོང་གནས་ལ་སིན་པ་ལ་བྱར་འདོད་གྱར་པ། །  
དེ་མིར་བདག་གིས་ཐོག་མར་སིང་རེ་བསོད་བར་བག། །

Love is the seed of this abundant harvest of buddhahood.  
It is like the water which causes growth and expansion,  
And it ripens into the state of lasting enjoyment,  
Therefore at the outset I shall praise compassion!

— *Introduction to the Middle Way, I, 2*



*Lojong*, meaning ‘mind training’ or ‘mind transformation’, centers on teachings that foster bodhichitta, or great compassion. ‘*Lo*’ denotes the mind, particularly its untamed, wandering aspect. ‘*Jong*’ refers to the use of potent remedies or antidotes to transform this wild mind. Utilizing a combination of skillful means and wisdom, these practices aim to dismantle self-centeredness. According to the Buddhist teachings, clinging to the self arises from erroneous beliefs about the self and leads to all suffering. Through wisdom practices like meditative analysis, one can achieve an understanding of selflessness. At the same time, the use of skillful means cultivates profound compassion. One engages in practices that involve seeing oneself and others as equal, exchanging one’s own well-being for that of others, and placing others’ needs above one’s own.

The introduction of *lojong* teachings to Tibet is credited to Arya Atisha (982–1055). Atisha was a distinguished Indian scholar and the abbot of Vikramashila University. His central role in bringing the Dharma from India to Tibet is unparalleled. Known to Tibetans as “Lord” (Jowo Jé) i, Atisha authored important texts, including the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*.<sup>1</sup> In 1042, responding to an invitation from Tibetan king Yeshe Öd, Atisha embarked on a mission to Tibet. He dedicated his life to the teaching and translation of Buddhist texts, thus revitalizing Buddhism in Tibet. His work led to the founding of the Kadampa School by his disciples. Among his eminent Tibetan disciples were “Khu”, Khutön Tsöndru Yungdrang, “Ngok”, Ngok Lekpé Sherap, and “Drom”, Dromtön Gyalwé Jungné. They were revered as embodiments of Avalokiteshvara, Mañjushri, and Vajrapani, respectively. They posed questions to Atisha which framed the *lojong* teachings’ core principles.<sup>2</sup>

ལམ་གྱི་ཚེས་ཐམས་ཅད་གྱི་མཚོག་གང་ལགས་ལྟུང་བས།

**What are the supreme aspects of the path?**



ལྔ ཚོས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་བདག་མེད་ཅེས། །  
གང་ཚེ་ཤེས་རབ་གྱིས་མཐོང་ན། །  
སྲབ་བསྲུལ་དག་གིས་ཚུགས་མི་འགྱུར། །  
འདི་ནི་རྣམ་དག་ལམ་ཡིན་ནོ། །

“All phenomena are selfless.”

When you see this with wisdom,

Suffering will not harm you.

This is the path of purity.

— *Dhammapada*,<sup>3</sup> verse 279

In response to a single question from Khu, Ngok, and Drom, Arya Atisha detailed the eight essential aspects of the path, treating their singular inquiry as if it were eight different questions. The first question was:

### **What is the supreme knowledge?**

Arya Atisha replied:

མཁམ་པའི་མཚོག་བདག་མེད་གྱི་དོན་རྟོགས་པ་ཡིན།

**The supreme knowledge is the realization of the meaning of selflessness.**

This is put into practice as follows:

- Examine the self asking the following questions:
  1. Is this 'self' my name?
  2. Is this 'self' my body?
  3. Is this 'self' my mind?  
Further look for the identity of the mind:  
Where does it arise? Where does it stay? And, where does it goes?
  4. Where is this 'self'?
- Meditation on selflessness.  
This means that when you don't find anything truly existent, rest uncontrived in that state. This is very important.

What do we have to abandon?

- *Pride*



ལྡོ བཟུང་བར་དཀའ་ཞིང་ཡང་བ་དང་། །  
གང་དུ་དགའ་བར་འགྲོ་བ་ཡི། །  
སེམས་འདུལ་བ་ནི་ལེགས་པ་སྟེ། །  
སེམས་དུལ་བ་ཡིས་བདེ་བ་འདྲེན། །

ལྡོ འདུས་བྱས་ཐམས་ཅད་མི་རྟག་ཅེས། །  
གང་ཚེ་ཤེས་རབ་གྱིས་མཐོང་ན། །  
སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེད་དག་གིས་ཚུགས་མི་འགྱུར། །  
འདི་ནི་རྣམ་དག་ལམ་ཡིན་ནོ། །

Difficult to catch, ever swift,  
Moving wherever it pleases.  
Taming the mind is wonderful,  
For a tamed mind brings happiness.

“Everything conditioned is impermanent.”  
When you see this with wisdom,  
Suffering will not harm you.  
This is the path of purity.

— *Dhammapada*, verses 35 & 277



Khu, Ngok, and Drom' second question was:

**What is the supreme discipline?**

Arya Atisha replied:

བརྩོན་པའི་མཚོག་སེམས་རྒྱུད་དུལ་བ་ཡིན།

**The supreme discipline is to be able to tame one's own mind.**

This is put into practice as follows:

- Abandon three attachments:
  1. Attachment to this life;
  2. Attachment to samsara; and
  3. Attachment to negative emotions.
- Practice impermanence and learn to detach from the comforts of this life.
- Realize the flaws of samsara.
- Notice how negative emotions function.
- Cultivate mindfulness, carefulness, and attentiveness.

What do we have to abandon?

- *Attachment*

འདྲིལ་བུ་ལྟར་

ལྡོག་པའི་བྱ་བ་ལྲོག་པའི། །  
ཉེས་པ་རྣམས་ནི་བྱེད་པར་སྒྲ། །  
ཕན་དང་ལེགས་པ་གང་ཡིན་པ། །  
དེ་ནི་མཚོག་ཏུ་བྱ་བར་དགའ། །

Easy to do are things

That are bad and harmful to oneself.

But exceedingly difficult to do are things

That are good and beneficial.

— *Dhammapada, verse 163*

Khu, Ngok, and Drom' third question was:

**What is the supreme quality?**

Arya Atisha replied:

ཡོན་ཏན་གྱི་མཚོག་པན་སེམས་ཚེ་བ་ཡིན།

**The supreme quality is always thinking for the benefit of others.**

This is put into practice as follows:

- The four immeasurables:
  1. Equanimity.  
*May all sentient beings abide in great equanimity free of all notions of near and far and free from attachment and aversion.*
  2. Compassion.  
*May all sentient beings be free from suffering and its causes.*  
Practice *tonglen*, giving and taking.
  3. Loving-kindness.  
*May all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.*
  4. Sympathetic joy.  
*May all sentient beings never be separated from the sublime happiness free from suffering.*
- Relative bodhicitta

What to abandon:

- *Anger, hatred, aversion, and unhappiness.*



ལྷོ རྣམ་འགྲོའ་ལས་ནི་སྤྱན་ཚོགས་སྐྱེ། །  
རྣམ་འགྲོའ་མིན་ལས་སྤྱན་ཚོགས་འཛོད། །  
འགྲོའ་བ་དང་ནི་འཕོང་བ་སྟེ། །  
ལམ་འདི་རྣམ་གཉིས་ཤེས་བྱས་ནས། །  
ཇི་ལྟར་སྤྱན་ཚོགས་རབ་འཕེལ་བ། །  
དེ་ལྟར་བདག་ཉིད་ངེས་འདུག་གེ། །

Wisdom springs from meditation;  
Without meditation, wisdom wanes.  
Having known these  
Two paths of progress and decline,  
Let a man so conduct himself  
That his wisdom may increase.

— *Dhammapada, verse 282*

Khu, Ngok, and Drom' fourth question was:

**What is the supreme pith instruction?**

Arya Atisha replied:

གདམས་ངག་གི་མཚོན་ཏུ་རང་སེམས་ལ་ལྟ་བ་ཡིན།

**The supreme pith instruction is to always look at one's mind.**

This is put into practice following three levels:

1. *Active mind*: Relative bodhicitta. The thought, “May all sentient beings be free from suffering and its causes and attain the state of buddhahood!”
2. *Less active mind*: Looking at your thoughts, in other words shamata meditation.
3. *Non-active mind*: Unfabricated shamata meditation, which is free from effort and object.

What to abandon:

- *Distraction*



༄ མདུན་ནས་བགོལ་ཞིང་རྒྱབ་ནས་བགོལ། །  
 དབུས་ནས་བགོལ་ཏེ་སྲིད་པ་བཟལ། །  
 ཀུན་ནས་རྣམ་པར་གྲོལ་བའི་ཡིད། །  
 ཕྱིན་ཆད་སྐྱེ་བ་ཆེད་མི་འགྱུར། །

༄ ལུས་འདི་ན་བྱུན་ལྟ་བུར་རིག་བྱས་ཤིང་། །  
 ཚེས་ནི་སྒྲིག་རྒྱ་ལྟ་བུར་མངོན་ཤེས་པ། །  
 བདུད་གྱི་མེ་ཏྲིག་མཛའ་མོ་བཅག་ནས་ཀྱང་། །  
 འཆི་བདག་རྒྱལ་པོས་མཐོང་བ་མེད་པར་འགྲོ། །

Let go of the past,  
 Let go of the future,  
 Let go of the present,  
 And cross over  
 To the farther shore of existence.  
 With mind wholly liberated,  
 You shall come no more to birth and death.

Whoever realizes that this body is just like foam,  
 Whoever knows that phenomena are like a mirage,  
 Will break Mara's flower-tipped arrows,  
 And travel on unseen by the King of Death.

— *Dhammapada, verses 348 & 46*

Khu, Ngok, and Drom' fifth question was:

**What is the supreme antidote?**

Arya Atisha replied:

གཉེན་པོའི་མཚོག་གང་ཡང་རང་བཞིན་མེད་པར་ཤེས་པ་ཡིན།

**The supreme antidote is seeing that nothing is existent.**

This is put into practice as follows:

- *Active*: “**Burjom**”, eliminating thoughts as they arise. Try not to express, suppress, ignore, or avoid your emotions.
- *Non-active*: Meditation that is natural, thought-free, effortless, and unforced. When you practice **burjom**, examining thoughts with your mind, and when you don't find anything, rest naturally in that state, uncontrived.

What to abandon:

- *Ignorance*



ལྷ དམན་པའི་ཚོས་ནི་བསྟེན་མི་བྱ། །  
བག་མེད་པར་ནི་གནས་མི་བྱ། །  
ལོག་པའི་ལྟ་བ་བསྟེན་མི་བྱ། །  
འཇིག་རྟེན་འཕེལ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་བྱ། །

ལྷ ཇི་ལྟར་དུམ་བུ་གཅིག་པའི་བྲག། །  
རྒྱུང་གིས་གཡོ་བར་མི་བྱེད་པ། །  
དེ་བཞིན་བསྟོད་དང་སྦྱང་པ་ལ། །  
མཁས་པ་རྣམས་ནི་གཡོ་བ་མེད། །

ལྷ དེས་ན་དགའ་བར་མི་བྱ་སྟེ། །  
དགའ་བོ་བོར་བ་སྡིག་པ་ཉིད། །  
གང་ཡང་དགའ་བར་མི་འཇོག་པ། །  
དེ་ལ་སྡོག་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །





Do not follow lower teachings.

Do not abide in carelessness.

Do not follow false views.

Do not increase worldliness.

Just as solid rock

Is not moved by wind,

Likewise, the wise are not moved

By praise and blame.

Do not aim at pleasure,

For the loss of pleasure is painful.

For the one who never grasps at pleasure,

There are no bonds.

— *Dhammapada, verses 167, 81 & 211*

Khu, Ngok, and Drom' sixth question was:

### **What is the supreme conduct?**

Arya Atisha replied:

སྤོད་པའི་མཚོག་འཇིག་རྟེན་དང་མི་མཐུན་པ་ཡིན།

**The supreme conduct is going astray from worldly concerns.**

This is put into practice as follows,

- Reflect on the eight worldly concerns:  
Attachment to:
  1. Gain
  2. Praise
  3. Good reputation
  4. Sense of pleasure  
Aversion to:
  5. Loss
  6. Criticism
  7. Bad reputation
  8. Unpleasant experiences
- Reflect on desiring/wishing less and being more content.
- You have suffering, but you don't suffer. You have attachment, but you don't have clinging like an iron grip. You have ego, 'I', but you are not attached to self.
- Your attachment to the eight worldly concerns is a measurement of your practice.

What to abandon:

- *Jealousy. (Jealousy arises from the eight worldly concerns.)*

# དེག་ལཱེན་

༄ འདོད་ཆགས་འདྲ་བའི་མེ་མེད་དེ། །  
ཁོ་བ་ལྟ་བུའི་ཚུ་སྲིན་མེད། །  
མོངས་པ་འདྲ་བའི་བྲ་བ་མེད། །  
སྲིད་པ་འདྲ་བའི་ཚུ་གྲུང་མེད། །

༄ ཁོ་བ་སངས་ཤིང་ར་རྒྱལ་རབ་ཏུ་སངས། །  
རབ་ཏུ་སྦྱོར་བ་ཀུན་ལས་རིང་དུ་བཀལ། །  
མིང་དང་གཟུགས་ལ་མ་ཞེན་ཅི་ཡང་མེད། །  
སྤྲུག་བསྐྱེད་རྣམས་ནི་རྗེས་སུ་འབབ་མི་འགྱུར། །

༄ གང་གིས་བྱུང་ཚུབ་ཡན་ལག་རྣམས། །  
ཡང་དག་སེམས་ཀྱིས་ལེགས་པར་བསྐྱོམ། །  
ལེན་པ་རྣམས་ལས་སྤྱིར་སྤྱངས་ཤིང་། །  
ཉེ་བར་ལེན་ལ་མི་དགའ་བ། །  
ཟག་ཟད་སྤང་བ་ལྡན་པ་དེ། །  
འཛིག་རྟེན་ཡོངས་སུ་སྤྱང་ན་འདའ། །



There is no fire like desire;  
No monster like anger;  
No net like delusion;  
And no torrent like craving.

Abandon anger! Abandon pride!  
Leave all fetters behind.  
Totally unattached to name and form,  
You will not sink into suffering.

Cultivating the factors of enlightenment  
With a genuine mind,  
You will be released from all grasping  
And will not take joy in attachment.  
Exhausting defilements, and full of light,  
You will completely pass beyond suffering in this world.

— *Dhammapada, verses 251, 221 & 89*

Khu, Ngok, and Drom' seventh question was:

**What is the supreme accomplishment?**

Arya Atisha replied:

དངོས་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་མཚོན་ཉོན་མོངས་པ་ཇི་ཚུང་ལ་སོང་བ་ཡིན།

**The supreme accomplishment is the reduction of negative emotions.**

This is put into practice as follows,

- Being careful, mindful, and attentive as negative emotions arise.
- Reducing negative emotions through devotion and supplication. This helps because when you have devotion and make supplications, at that time your mind is one- pointed and so you have fewer negative emotions.
- All the other techniques listed above.

What to abandon:

- *All negative emotions*

༄ གཅེས་པ་རྣམས་ལས་སྤྱོད་སྤྱོད། །  
 གཅེས་པ་རྣམས་ལས་འཛིགས་པ་སྤྱོད། །  
 གཅེས་པ་རྣམས་ནི་སངས་བྱུང་ན། །  
 སྤྱོད་མེད་ཅིང་འཛིགས་པ་མེད། །  
  
 ༄ སྤོང་པ་སངས་ཤིང་ལེན་པ་བྱལ། །  
 དེས་པའི་ཚིག་དང་བརྗོད་པ་རིག། །  
 ཡི་གེ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་གོ་རིམ་དང་། །  
 སྤོང་དང་སྤྱི་མ་དག་ཀྱང་ཤེས། །  
 མཐའ་མའི་ལུས་ནི་དེ་ཡིན་ཏེ། །  
 ཤེས་རབ་ཚེན་སྤྱོད་བར་བརྗོད། །



From affection springs grief.  
 From affection springs fear.  
 For him who is wholly free from affection  
 There is no grief, whence then fear?

He who is free from craving and attachment,  
 Is perfect in uncovering the true meaning of the Teaching,  
 And knows the arrangement of the sacred texts in correct  
 sequence—  
 He, indeed, is the bearer of his final body.  
 He is truly called the profoundly wise one, the great man.

— *Dhammapada*, verses 213 & 352

Khu, Ngok, and Drom' eighth question was:

**What is the supreme sign of accomplishment?**

Arya Atisha replied:

གུབ་ཏུགས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་འདོད་པ་ཇི་ཚུང་ལ་སོང་བ་ཡིན།

**The supreme sign of accomplishment is reduced craving or desire for fruition.**

This is put into practice as follows,

- Knowledge of emptiness and the Prajñāparamita Sutras. Knowledge of the ultimate natural state and the relative natural state.

For example, it is taught in the Heart Sutra:

- There is no path. There is no primordial wisdom. There is no attainment. There is also no non-attainment.
- Knowledge of tathāgatagarbha (buddha-nature). Buddha-nature abides in the mind-streams of all sentient beings. It is the nature of mind: the unity of clarity and emptiness. The mind is empty in essence, and naturally clear, with all the excellent enlightened qualities present and complete there. If you know this then you won't think that you need to become something else, something that you are not.

What to abandon:

- *Specific attachment to fruition*



## Samye Institute

Samye Monastery was Tibet's first and foremost Buddhist monastery. Its importance to the religious history of Tibet cannot be overstated, for here Tibetan Buddhism was established, tested, defended, and upheld for well over a millennium. Inspired by this grand accomplishment, and intending to continue this incredible legacy, Samye Institute upholds an online platform that connects students to these profound teachings of the Buddhadharma in a modern and accessible way.

Samye Institute offers tools and training to enable practitioners of all levels to practice authentically and confidently. Buddhist practitioners, both newer and long-term students, will find resources here to support their study, reflection, and meditation. Here you may find teachings on working with the emotions and the mind, introduction to meditation, training in compassion, advanced meditation, and special practices unique to our tradition.

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## Samye Translations

Once Samye monastery had been built, one of Guru Padmasambhava's main projects was to translate the Dharma into the Tibetan language. Taking this vast and profound translation project as our inspiration, Samye Translations aspired to follow in the footsteps of the Mahaguru, and like the translators at Samye monastery once did, translate and spread the Dharma in all languages throughout the world.

Samye Translations in particular looks to Prince Murup Tsenpo, a heart-disciple of Guru Padmasambhava who was praised for his translation efforts as Lhasé Lotsawa, is thus as our chief role model, for he embodies our aspiration to benefit the world through providing authentic sources for practice and realization. This sublime being was reborn thirteen generations later as the great treasure revealer Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa.

The core mission of Samye Translations is to help preserve and disseminate the Dharma by translating Buddhist practices and teachings and making them available in print as well as online. While our main focus is to support followers of the *Profound Treasures of Chokgyur Lingpa (Chokling Tersar)* by providing essential materials for their study and practice, we also translate texts from all Buddhist traditions, both ancient and modern, hailing from the time of Shakyamuni Buddha right up to our present age.

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1 For a translation, see: Atisha Dipamkara 2021.

2 These questions and answers were recorded in a work entitled *Sayings of the Kadam masters (bka' gdams gsung thor)*. The following exchange is an excerpt of a larger dialogue. An English translation of the full dialogue can be found in: Atisa and Dromtönpa 2008, 560.

3 For a full English translation of the Dhammapada, see e.g.: Buddha Shakyamuni 1996. For a Tibetan edition, see: shakya thub pa 2012.

