

*Advice by  
Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

*Tonglen Practice*

*Kopan Monastery, Kathmandu, Nepal*

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# Tonglen Practice

Video: [Tonglen Practice](#)

My most dear, most precious, most kind, most wish-fulfilling ones, all the students, all the friends, and all the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, everybody—as I mentioned the day before yesterday—from whom I got all the happiness from beginningless rebirths, and now, and in the future, including liberation and enlightenment, so everyone. Of course, then, that means from the numberless hell beings I received [my happiness, and also from] the numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, numberless ants, numberless mosquitoes, numberless bugs, all that, numberless human beings, sura beings, asura beings, intermediate state beings. They are so precious, not by qualities as a buddha, but by kindness. Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha also come from you, they come from the six realm precious sentient beings, those to whom you always pray and go for refuge before beginning a practice. Even Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, who you regard as so precious, to whom you devote yourself and think they are the highest, they all came from sentient beings. Even from a tiny one in the water or in the ocean, the tiny sentient beings you can't see with the eyes but through a machine, including them. So the numberless buddhas came from the six realm sentient beings, so they are the most precious. Okay.

So how are you? I hope you are well. Yes, so many people got this disease, the very famous, very, very famous coronavirus. It is amazing, *wow*, within one day, within some number of hours, so many people are dying in the world and in the most powerful countries, China and America, then Italy, Spain, and so forth. *Bah, bah, bah*. I heard the Italy president cried in a meeting [because] he didn't know what to do. That is very true, if you don't know what, how to prevent, what to do. Everyone hasn't met Dharma, does not have the karma, the merit, so the mind is unbelievably hallucinated. It is so dark, so dark, ignorant, so dark, so hallucinated. No merit to meet Buddhadharma, this most precious [thing]. To hear a mantra, to recite a mantra, to meditate on emptiness and bodhichitta, *wow*, is amazing. Not only for handling this, but to be free from samsara, the oceans of samsaric sufferings, the oceans of suffering of samsara to be free. Then not only that, even to be free from the lower nirvana, being bound in that for eons, eons, eons, and to achieve buddhahood, the total cessation of obscurations and the completion of realizations, for sentient beings.

I will tell you straight. Only the virus, what the common people in the world, the virus, are so scared of, *wow*, so many people die, *wow*, but, you see, in reality death can happen, without a virus, anytime. We have been hearing about it for the whole life. In the text it says, the Buddha's advice, teaching, it came from your guru. So you can die any time, any moment, without the virus! As I mentioned yesterday, by this year next time this name [people] read in the paper. They can't even see even your body; it is burned, finished. By this time, just a name, people talk just your name. Like my name, "Thubten Zopa," just that. Or "Lama Zopa," you read it in the paper, on my books. Just that,

send to the students. Then people talk. That is the real serious thing—any time, even tonight, as I mentioned the other day, in some minutes. All the time we have been hearing that. Look in *Bodhicharyavatara* and lamrim. *Bah, bah, bah*. But that becomes not important. It is not important but, oh, the virus, *waaaw*, is the most important, kind of. You got the main fear of the virus, but this, yeah, any time the breath, this breath, which is like a machine, can be stopped anytime. The breath, in and out, can be stopped anytime. You have no power, you have no control over that, to keep it forever. No, you don't have that control. Then for that, you have to practice Dharma.

After death, the consciousness continues. The body disappears, becomes ashes, but the consciousness continued, just like the consciousness continued from yesterday to today, then this goes to tomorrow, like that. The previous second of consciousness continues to the present second of consciousness, then this present consciousness continues to the next second of consciousness. So from past lives. That is why you have so many people, old, so many young people who can remember their past life. Those with a clear mind can remember it. You see? Also through meditation, through meditation, as you purify more. When you achieve clairvoyance through shamatha, calm abiding, shamatha, mental quiescence, *zhiné*, then you achieve clairvoyance, then you remember past and future, you can see past and future lives, yours and others.

I just remembered. After Lama's holy body was offered to the fire, Kyabje Zong Rinpoche, Lama's guru... I invited him from Switzerland, Rinpoche came two times. Lama took the kind of a stroke, so then I invited Kyabje Zong Rinpoche from Switzerland, Kyabje Zong Rinpoche's past life, to do puja, the Most, not the Most, Secret Hayagriva. That is what Rinpoche does most. Sometimes a very wrathful, big torma he burned in fire, the big wrathful one, Most Secret Hayagriva, to relieve the paralysis. His Holiness Zong Rinpoche did puja, then he left for Switzerland. Then when Lama passed away, I also again invited him. When we offered fire to Lama's holy body, His Holiness Zong Rinpoche was there. There should be a specific person, not a disciple, not a student, [to light the fire]. I think there was an ex-monk, gelong, ex-gelong, from Samten Ling Monastery, Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen's monastery in Boudha. Of course, the original monastery is Kyitong Samten Ling in Tibet, near Nepal. The monks lived there in the monastery built by a Mongolian lama who lived there a long time, because of the issue of Dolgyal he lived a long time in Mongolia and passed away. The ex-monk was Losang. There was some [other] name but I have forgotten it. He was an ex-monk. He helped, he was there, by wrapping Lama's holy body on the ice. He came from Los Angeles. He came. He was one person. Then there were some students, John McKay, John, and there was another student, I think maybe from Los Angeles, I forgot his name, maybe Don Brown. Maybe, I'm not sure. Normally when the person is dead, the body becomes like wood, like a piece of wood. I remember this, in Bangalore, not Bangalore, sorry, Bylakuppe in south India, it was a long time ago, I was in a benefactor's house, a benefactor from Tibet. For the benefactor in Tibet, we have to go do puja every month, at the same time at night, reciting *Tara Puja*. My teacher who took care of me in Tibet, who led me to become a monk... I took getsul ordination from the abbot of Dromo Geshe's monastery, the abbot Thubten Jinpa. He was very good, very good, from Sera. He ordained me as a getsul. [My teacher], who made

offerings for me, offerings to the monks in the monastery, very kindly, because all night we did *Tara Praises, Twenty-One Tara Praises*, he had a long stick, then a needle is put inside it—I didn't get the needle—so when you fall asleep, then to wake you up, the mind fresh. Down below me there is a monk from Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, the Panchen Lama's monastery, who came from there, Tashi Tsondru. After him, there is another young monk from Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. He got [hit with the needle] maybe one or two times [because] he fell asleep. Then [for] my teacher, it is a method; the sentient beings, to free them from samsara, the oceans of samsaric sufferings, and to bring them to enlightenment, then whatever fits—peaceful action, increasing, controlling, wrathful—to benefit sentient beings. So he [the young monk] got [the needle] one or two times. Not so much putting [the needle] inside, not so much the needle going inside, not the needle going inside the flesh, not like that. It was for his purification.

That family [the benefactors of the Tara Night] escaped to Bylakuppe, south India. The mother has, I think, two husbands. One was an ex-monk from Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. He died while I was there, and his body became wood, exactly like wood, a piece of wood, on the bed, laying down on the bed. Sort of like that. So hard become the body. I saw, I saw, I was holding his hand, he tried to speak but his tongue, this is a near sign of death, his tongue rolled, it became blue, and I couldn't hear what he was saying, [just like] what is normally explained in the texts, the tantra teachings, about the twenty-five absorptions. In the generation stage, it is explained before meditating on the dharmakaya. So it happened.

Losang was helping during the fire puja. He reported to Kyabje Zong Rinpoche, when he was with the other students helping [to prepare] Lama's holy body in the Tibetan way, to put on the initiation materials, the crown and so forth... Then you bring it from there to where there is built [the cremation oven] with cement to put the holy body inside, to put on the fire. There is oil inside. Down below there is a hole to put the fire. Losang reported to Kyabje Zong Rinpoche, Lama's holy body, when they put the legs up... His hands were holding a bell and vajra, I think, like this. When they put the dress on, Losang said, it was very surprising, like not dead, but very soft, very soft, very soft, not dead, very soft. He reported that to Kyabje Zong Rinpoche. When they were rolling up the holy body, that time the cement, not cement, the sperm came out. He said it came out only that time. It didn't come out before, it only came out that time. He was very surprised, then when it came out, he told Zong Rinpoche, there was so strong, so strong bad smell, he said to Kyabje Zong Rinpoche. That is the view of his ordinary mind, view, perception. That means Lama was in meditation; his subtle mind was there still, it was in meditation. It means that. Yes, we did Heruka Body Mandala self-initiation, this is Lama's deity, then Vajrayogini. Kyabje Zong Rinpoche was there. Then Rinpoche did *jangwa*, like for the common people do *jangwa*, to Lama's holy body. So that shows, he didn't know, he was so shocked, so surprised that Lama's subtle consciousness—at death time the subtle mind is there—is still there, in meditation, so he did not pass away. That, which Lama, kind of, I don't know, six months ago or maybe more than that, I'm not sure, in Dharamsala, to Piero and Stefano, he told that if all the students came in one gompa or room and if all the students recite for one year Vajrasattva, then

Lama would live for one year, not live, he would be in meditation on clear light, the subtle mind would be there. He would live, he would be meditating for one year. Of course, Jacie, who has been [Lama]s secretary for 7 years, she was very worried. I tried to explain that to Kyabje Zong Rinpoche—sorry, I do a little bit quick—but Rinpoche, I think due to our karma, Rinpoche did not accept. Maybe I didn't make it clear, I'm not sure. Rinpoche said, "In Tibet only His Holiness the Dalai Lama's gurus, only high lamas like that, is kept the holy body." [He said] like that, and that also people would criticize me. Because Lama doesn't have the title of Rinpoche for the Tibetan people and he appears to be... With children, Lama can be like children, play with children. He can appear as a business person, or appear as a learned geshe and discuss philosophy. Lama can appear [in many ways], but he didn't have something, people knowing him, kind of famous, kind of something, he didn't have, that is what Rinpoche said. I did try to explain two times. So due to our karma, we didn't get permission.

Then, Kyabje Zong Rinpoche, when he [Losang] put the fire, then the first smoke he checked, it was white. White means the person who died with a virtuous thought is going to a pure land or a higher rebirth. Like that, white smoke came out. Rinpoche said. Then Rinpoche told me, "Oh, oh, he is somebody who is able to actualize the tantric path." *Lab na sim pa re du a*, "actualize the tantric path." Lama had actualized, in the common view of us ordinary common people, in some people's view, the clear light, the illusory body and clear light, the five stages of the completion stage, the isolation of body, speech, and mind, then, he achieved the clear light and illusory body, the unification of those two, the clear light and illusory body. In the common view. That is the common view. Of course, in the uncommon view, he was an enlightened being. Even the common view is like that. Then [Kyabje Zong] Rinpoche was happy by seeing the sign.

Then, what I was going to say is this. There is where you keep the oil inside to offer to the fire, that is upside down. You keep the ashes inside for seven days, and some signs happen, not all the time, [such as] later you see a footprint, depending where they are going to reincarnate, or sometimes mantras. One high lama [who lived] down below Lawudo in Solu Khumbu, Kari Rinpoche, for seven days they kept [his ashes] in an iron container. [When they opened it,] there was the Vajrayogini mantra all around: it appeared like that. It depends on [the lama]; it is not [always] that same. At that time Geshe Trinle was there; Lama's relative came from Australia. He was there. He was learned in philosophy. And there was a lama, an incarnate lama, from Canada. In his past life he was Gen Jangtse, very ascetic. He never wore shoes in the monastery. When he was going to *chora*, debate, [he went with] naked feet. He never touched money. In the puja, when a benefactor made offering, always with his robe he goes like that. He can remember, besides he remembers his own past life, he remembers his father's past life. Like that, he can tell. Like this, I just remembered this lama, so the story. I won't take longer, sorry.

I'm coming back from the story.

[Togme Sangpo, *Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva*, v. 10:]

མོག་མེད་དུས་ནས་བདག་ལ་བརྗེ་བ་ཅན། །  
མ་རྣམས་སྐྱུག་ན་རང་བདེས་ཅི་ཞིག་བྱ། །  
དེ་བྱིར་མཐའ་ཡས་སེམས་ཅན་བསྐྱེད་བྱའི་བྱིར། །  
བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་ཆུལ་སྲས་ལག་ལེན་ཡིན། །

TOG ME DÜ NÄ DAG LA TSE WA CHÄN

**If the mothers who have guarded you with loving kindness from beginningless rebirths**

MA NAM DUG NA RANG DE CHI SHIG JA

**Are suffering, what is the use of you being happy?**

DE CHIR THA YÄ SEM CHÄN DRÄL JÄI CHIR

**Therefore, to generate bodhichitta in order to liberate**

JANG CHHUB SEM KYE GYÄL SÄ LAG LEN YIN

**The limitless sentient beings is a practice of a bodhisattva.**

So what it is saying, it is by the great bodhisattva Togme Sangpo, *De chir tha yä sem chän dräl jäi chir / Jang chhub sem kye gyäl sä lag len yin. Tog me dü nä dag la tse wa chän / Ma nam dug na rang de chi shig ja*. “The mother sentient beings who have looked after you, who have guarded you, from beginningless rebirths with loving kindness,” all of you from, not just this life, this mother in this life, yes, but all sentient beings from beginningless rebirths have been *tse wa chän*, “guarded you with loving kindness.” “If they are suffering,” *Ma nam dug na rang de chi shig ja*, “what is the use?” “If they are suffering what is the use of yourself just to be happy?” What is the use of that? *Rang de chi shig ja*.

In the teachings it is explained that your mother got caught down there on the ground, a tiger is eating her, biting her, then you are on top of the tree, you are on top of the tree so then you are free from that danger, so you sing, you sing a song, but your mother is being eaten by a tiger, your actual kind mother. Like that, how that is so selfish not helping your mother, not concerned even, so how that is so terrible, so selfish, so cruel. Like that, like that, the numberless hell beings, suras, asuras, intermediate state beings, have been suffering from beginningless rebirths, [experiencing] the oceans of suffering of samsara in each realm, the oceans of suffering of each realm, *bah, bah, bah*, then yourself alone is very happy, then what is the use of that? Like the example I gave you, what is the use of that? *De chir tha yä... De chir tha yä sem chän dräl jäi chir*, “Therefore, in order to liberate the mother sentient beings, whose number has no limit, then to generate bodhichitta, that is the practice of a bodhisattva,” *Jang chhub sem kye gyäl sä lag len yin*.

As I mentioned like that, not only oneself, even not that, to achieve liberation from samsara, not only that. The real purpose of life is the numberless sentient beings to free them from the oceans of samsaric sufferings and bring them to peerless happiness of buddhahood by oneself. Therefore, oneself must achieve enlightenment. “Therefore, then, I’m going to hear the lojong teachings.” Okay.

So here, I mention one thing. Yesterday I started emptiness but before that I have something to say because it might take some time. In the *Lama Chopa* (LC96)... Kadampa Geshe Chekawa's *Seven-Point Thought Transformation* says:

སློང་བཅུད་ཟླིག་བས་གང་བའི་ཚོ།

ཀྱེན་ངན་བྱང་ཚུབ་ལམ་དུ་བསྐྱུར།

NÖ CHÜ DIG PÄ GANG WÄI TSHE

**When the world and sentient beings are filled with negative karma,**

KYEN NGÄN JANG CHHUB LAM DU GYUR

**Transform bad conditions into the path to enlightenment.**

*Nö* is place, *chü* is essence, that means sentient beings. *Nö* is the world, *chu* is the sentient beings. *Dig pä gang wäi tshe*, “filled up with the negative karma,” means “the result of negative karma,” result of negative karma, result of negative karma, such as the complete negative karmas, the ten nonvirtues actions, for example. There is the ripened-aspect result in the lower realms, hell and so forth, the rebirth. And then, even when you are born as a human being due to another good karma, still you experience the suffering results of previous negative karma, like killing or whatever. The possessed result, possessed result [is that] the nagas and devas harm. They become violent, kind of like bad weather, like the bad weather, not peaceful, bad weather. What is it called? Storms and wind, *bah, bah, bah*, like that, *trugpa*, angry and harm, harm to people, to yourself. Then, the black side, *nag chhog pa*—the white side is those who like Dharma, virtue; the black side are nagas and devas who like to harm, nonvirtuous—they develop. So this is what is happening now. Now the time is not only degenerated time but it is over degenerated. It is the degenerate of the degenerate. [There are] the five degenerations. [Degeneration of] delusions, very strong delusions. Because of that, degeneration of life, so [life is] short. The general people's life now is much shorter. Then, [degeneration of] time also; [there are] wars, disease, wars, all these, now the violence, even before that, it was different. Then, degeneration of view; not only emptiness, the right view, even the worldly view, karma, because people are so difficult to, people don't have the karma to hear teachings on karma. Even if you explain, they don't believe it. They believe the opposite to from creating virtue, happiness comes; from creating nonvirtue, suffering comes. They don't believe that, totally opposite. *Bah, bah, bah*. They create, day and night continuously, in an unbelievable rush, negative karma, as if it is correct, a cause of happiness, so what they experience is so much suffering, lots of problems, because [they do what is] totally opposite. Then happens diseases, famines, so much fighting, quarrels, so many obstacles in the world, in the country, like that. You experience like that and the whole world and sentient beings experience all these various results of negative karma, *bah, bah, bah, ssssh*, so much.

*Nö chü dig pä gang wäi tshe*. So, “When this world, place, and the sentient beings are full of negative karma,” filled with negative karma, *Kyen ngän jang chhub lam du gyur*, “Bad conditions transform in the path to enlightenment.”



I just, to explain the subject, then I just introduce it at the beginning. Then all these bad conditions, all these, the virus, so many people dying, sick, famine, *bah, bah, bah*, then these things utilizing, instead of obstacles, by the practice of thought transformation, bodhichitta, emptiness, you use as a condition, instead of an obstacle, you use them with this Dharma, holy Dharma, thought transformation. You use these obstacles as a useful condition, *thun kyen*. As an obstacle, then you utilize that as a useful condition to achieve, for what? For what? Just the pleasure of this life? No, for enlightenment, not only to become free from samsara you, but to achieve enlightenment for the numberless sentient beings, and then to bring them, not only to free them from the oceans of samsaric sufferings, [but] to bring them to enlightenment by yourself, for that.

Then, *?pa chu drog su chen* means then you take the obstacles, you take the obstacles, you take it in the helpful, you take the obstacles, you utilize the obstacles in the supporting, in supporting, helping, you. You take it that way to achieve enlightenment for sentient beings. Then, those who harm you, those who harmed you, human being or spirits, anyone, anyone who harmed, you take them as a virtuous friend who brings you to enlightenment. You transform them into a virtuous friend who brings you to enlightenment. Okay? So like that. So then, in that way, “The bad conditions,” *Kyen ngän jang chhub lam du gyur*, “The bad conditions you transform into the path to enlightenment.” So all the obstacles, now here you have to understand, all these various obstacles, *gag kyen*, conditions that cause obstacles to you, harmed you, or cause sickness, whatever, so you transform all of them into happiness. “Into the path to enlightenment” is okay, yes, but what it means is everything transform into happiness. You understand? I just make a simple title: everything is transformed into happiness, a path to happiness.

Okay, now, today meditation on emptiness is maybe difficult. I began, sorry, but maybe wait for tomorrow.

*(The teddy bear falls off the couch)* I think he got upset. I said I will speak tomorrow, then he got upset. Okay.

When the death happens, when you are going to die. For example, I mentioned it tonight, earlier, I will mention it as the time goes. This is very important, write it down. Please write it down. I’m going to explain it this way, but then later, those whose minds not yet, doesn’t understand all that, from there whatever you can take, you utilize death in that way. When you think you are dying, with the virus or whatever, without the virus, by cancer or anything, or in the night time you are sleeping and a mouse came to bite your feet so you think you are going to die, I’m just joking, then what to think, it is very important. So the first thing is, “May all the obstacles that, Kyabgon Rinpoche, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, has,” so I said, “The one savior of all the six-realm sentient beings, the hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, sura beings, asura beings, the one object of refuge, the originator of all happiness, where it came from, to have a stable life.” His Holiness to have a stable life. That and then, “[May] all spontaneously succeed everything whatever His Holiness has, the wishes whatever His Holiness has, the wishes whatever His Holiness has.” “All the obstacles,” “All the obstacles, may it

ripen on my self-cherishing thought.” “May it ripen on my self-cherishing thought.” Because.... Well, old students understand but perhaps new ones, [think,] “Why me? Why me?” They might question like that. From beginningless rebirths, all the suffering that you have been experiencing from beginningless rebirths up to now, now, and again the endless suffering of samsara that you are going to [experience], all came from, is caused by, your self-cherishing thought, the selfish mind. It is because of that. That is your real enemy, so “May it ripen on that, be received on that.” That is the first thing, to receive [all the obstacles] on that and then eliminate it. Receive them on that and then eliminate it. So eliminate that, kill that, your one enemy, the selfish mind, from where all the obstacles come, from where all the misfortune comes, everything. Eliminate that.

Then, “Any other great holy being who came in this world to benefit sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha, all their obstacles, all their obstacles to a long life, may it ripen on this self-cherishing thought, who gives me all the suffering and obstacles of the past, present, and future.” “May it ripen on this.” Pray that. Then, of course, not only that, you can think of all the sangha who preserve Dharma, spread Dharma, you can think of their obstacles. Then the benefactors who help the Dharma. You can expand like that. “All the sentient beings’ disease, all their sufferings, may it ripen on this, my inner enemy, the self-cherishing thought.” Then they ripen on this, then the self-cherishing thought does not exist, even in name. “Even in name” means it totally doesn’t exist. The root of samsara, grasping the I, holding the I... This is not the merely labeled I. This is I that which exists in mere name but you hold it as truly existent, as existing from its own side, as existing by nature, in our everyday language, the real I, while it is not. *Dag dzin*, grasping the I, holding the I, which is the root of samsara, not only the self-cherishing thought, also this becomes totally nonexistent even in name.

Then, you request, you request, your guru-buddha you request, “May the bodhichitta, the root of the two works, the works of self and works of others, and the remedy to samsara be generated in my heart immediately.”

If you have sickness or something, you can do that, it ripens on your sickness [?self-cherishing thought], kind of like that. That word, you can do also like that. You give [it to] yourself... We have *lu dzong puja*, *lu dzong*, a short puja, *lu dzong*. We make [a figure] with flour, dough. If somebody is sick or has obstacles, you make like this in the place of the person, then you give it to the spirit. You say how beautiful it is, thousands, millions, so much, gigantic, beautiful. You say these words. Then the spirits who are harming, causing disease, obstacles, the spirits already are nearby at the house, where you do the puja, *lu dzong*, they are already there waiting, you describe it and you make charity of it to the spirits in place of that person so as to not give harm. If you do virtue, like if you plant something hot, a seed, then a hot result arises. Like chili, you plant chili, then the result is also hot, like chili. If you plant chili, then it grows like that. Then, if something sweet you plant, a seed, then the result sweet comes. Use the example, like that, if virtue, benefit others, then happiness; then if you harm others, you get suffering. Like that. (Tibetan) Then you use, take as an example, when somebody harms you, how it is, like that, taking that example, they don’t have to give harm to others. For

example, in Vajra Yogini, when Geshe Lama Konchog, who after Lama Yeshe passed away then he came to Kopan, he did teaching, meditation for the Western students and Kopan monks and nuns, so he was at Vajra Yogini, and there was one child, all the doctors in the hospital decided he would die. What happened is that finally it came to Geshe Lama Konchog, asking him what to do. He did five minutes or something, a few minutes puja with practice like this, *lu dzong*, something short like this he did, and the child got recovered, which all the doctors agreed would die, wouldn't live. But Geshe Lama Konchog did a few minutes puja and he recovered. Oh, like that, this happens. *Lu dzong*.

So, you see, here, instead of making this figure in the place of that sick person and giving, making charity, to the spirits, you give yourself. Here you give yourself. You give yourself as a substitute of all the sentient beings. As a *lu* of all sentient beings, you give yourself. Then, instead of sentient beings being sick, you take the sickness. Instead of sentient beings dying, you die, and they become free from death, from that danger. You take the death on you, you experience that, so sentient beings are free from that. So you can dedicate like *lu*. So that is up to one's own practice.

Okay. So tonight that much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.