

# Heart Advice of Achos Rinpoche

Here is the will of Precious Abbot Achos, who achieved the rainbow body when near to passing away.

I reverently prostrate to the perfect gurus and to all the victorious ones, and offer a few meaningful words to you disciples who traverse great distances. From the pure karma collected in the past and by pure prayer you have achieved the freedoms and endowments [of the perfect human rebirth] and reached the holy seat, the place of origin of the Buddha's teaching. Guided by the holy virtuous friend, and so forth, you have all the inner and outer conditions gathered in having this precious opportunity. In order to repay the kindness of His Holiness who embodies all the objects of refuge, it is worthwhile to attend, listen to, and reflect upon these teachings. Do not cling to this life, which has SMALL BENEFIT AND GREAT DANGER. Always make effort in the divine Dharma, which definitely benefits the entire future. The Victorious Buddha advised: "Engage the activities of the three doors for the sake of others, thus one's own success is achieved along the way."<sup>1</sup> There is no difference between male and female as evil friends [of negative karma] who make you lose this and all future lives<sup>2</sup> – therefore throw them far away like a stone used for cleaning your bottom. The virtuous friend and virtuous companion is the originator of qualities – therefore correctly devote and dedicate yourself. Pure morality and great wisdom are the main qualities – therefore you should know them. The great and lesser vehicle is just a way of thinking – therefore do not separate from bodhicitta. If you engage in too much meaningless talk it becomes a basis for fighting – therefore limit your speech. If you create turmoil within a group of the sangha then hell is the place you will go – therefore be careful not to cause disunity among the sangha. If you become very partisan with regard to doctrinal schools<sup>3</sup> then you collect the negative karma of abandoning the holy Dharma<sup>4</sup> – therefore

train the mind in pure appearance regarding all the Dharma. If you don't both memorise the words and reflect on their meaning it is difficult to become self-disciplined by just hearing the teachings – therefore engage in both. In short, harmonise<sup>5</sup> the instructions of your own spiritual teachers and the Buddha's teachings; this is sufficient [advice]. Other than that, there is no need for further explanation – it is better to let this old monk recite OM MANI PADME HUM. I am here requesting and praying to the three Sublime Ones [Buddha, Dharma, Sangha] for you to have happiness in this and future lives. I offer this as a present to the assemblies who have a karmic connection with me.

This was bestowed as instruction to many disciples who went to study the Dharma, by the possessor of learning, the abbot Achos Rinpoche, the invisible hidden great yogi who, when near to passing away [in 1998 in Kham] into the sorrowless state, left in a rainbow body. May all be virtuous and auspicious.

Translated into English by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, with the help of Tenzin Dechen Rochard, at Deer Park Buddhist Centre, Wisconsin, USA, July 2007.

## Lama Zopa Rinpoche's concise commentary:

This text was given to the monks and the people who attended the teaching of His Holiness the Dalai Lama (not the teaching at Losar). This advice is an explanation of His Holiness' pure vision. These thoughts can benefit many people, especially as they come from a recent, great, accomplished practitioner who achieved the rainbow body, a very high Tantric realization.

This text specifically mentions the great danger of abandoning the Dharma. It is important to understand what this refers to. Examples of this are as follows:

Some Hinayanists think that the Mahayana is not the Buddha's teaching. Thus they abandon the Dharma of the Buddhist Mahayana.

Some Chinese Mahayanists who, although they practice the Mahayana sutras, consider that the Buddhist tantric teachings were not taught by the Buddha, but instead were adopted from Hindu tantric tradition. Thus they abandon the Dharma. They

<sup>1</sup> This implies that if you use the three doors just for the purpose of achieving happiness for yourself, not only can it not be achieved, but the happiness of others cannot be accomplished either. This is similar to the advice given by Shantideva on the benefits of the awakening mind.

<sup>2</sup> Not only does it waste this life, it makes you unable to achieve the temporary happiness of future lives, as well as the ultimate happiness that is the liberation from samsara and full enlightenment.

<sup>3</sup> The Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana systems as well as the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

<sup>4</sup> Abandoning the Dharma means: renouncing from the heart any teaching given by the Buddha. For Rinpoche's commentary on this see next column.

<sup>5</sup> Check that your teachers' instructions are in accordance with the Buddha's teachings - to protect you from mistaken or inappropriate instructions.



come to this conclusion without discussing the matter with learned Tibetan practitioners. There have been so many Tibetan practitioners, like stars in the night sky, who became enlightened through Buddhist tantric practice based upon the sutras. There have also been so many great Indian yogis who attained enlightenment through the practice of tantra based upon the sutras. The texts even mention specific times and places in which the Buddha presented the tantric teachings. So, without having done proper research, these Chinese Mahayana Buddhists abandon the Dharma of the Buddhist tantras.

Some Vajrayana practitioners think that the sutras are to be abandoned. Thus they abandon the Dharma. This is due to not understanding how to practice the Vajrayana. The Vajrayana practice is based upon the sutras. So by abandoning the sutras, they abandon the Dharma of both the Buddhist sutras and tantras.

Some Mahayana practitioners abandon the Hinayana teachings, including the pratimoksha vows and the teachings of the four noble truths. This is due to not understanding that the Mahayana is based upon the Hinayana. So by abandoning the Hinayana, they abandon the Dharma of both the Hinayana and the Mahayana teachings.

Some students studying the philosophical teachings find them too complex and are unable to understand them; they think that these teachings do not apply to them, so give up on them. Thus they abandon the Dharma. If this happens, the negative karma is heavier than destroying every single holy object, scripture, and temple in this world.

This text presents the very key essential advice about pure morality and wisdom, because without pure morality there is no successful attainment of calm abiding; and without calm abiding there is no great insight; and without great insight there is no direct realization of emptiness that directly ceases the gross and subtle defilements; and without ceasing these defilements there is no achievement of liberation from samsara nor of full enlightenment to enlighten all sentient beings. This complete path to enlightenment includes the Tantric practices and realizations as mentioned in Manjugosha Root Text. This is the wisdom you need – it is Dharma wisdom, not wisdom of how to make chocolate or an atomic bomb! This wisdom arises from reflection and meditation. With this kind of wisdom you can realize emptiness, bodhicitta, and the whole path to liberation or full enlightenment. Correct realization comes from correct practice, and that comes from correct understanding. Computers make life easier, if one knows how to use them, as long as there is electricity or battery power – yet numberless



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sentient beings have got enlightened without having studied computers! HA, HA, HA!

**W**hat the Manjugosha Root Tantra<sup>6</sup> says:

“A person who has degenerated morality will not gain the supreme attainment. Also they will not gain the middling attainment or even the final attainment. The Buddha did not say that tantric realizations can be achieved when one has degenerated morality. Such a person will not be able at all to enter the city of the sorrowless state. For this evil child there is no way to achieve tantric realizations. [How is this possible?] For a capable person who has degenerated their morality how is it possible to migrate to a happy realm? If one can’t achieve higher rebirth then how can one achieve sublime happiness? There is no need to mention not being able to achieve the realizations of secret mantra taught by the Buddha.”

The solution for having broken pratimoksha vows and degenerated samaya vows is self-initiation. This is the best method. It wipes off all those negative karmas of pratimoksha, bodhisattva, and tantric vows. However, to do self initiation you need to have done the preliminary highest yoga tantra retreat; and for that the prerequisite is a great initiation.

As far as self-initiation is concerned there is a long version, a middle version, and a short version. The ritual is made shorter by skipping the extensive offerings; you can also skip

<sup>6</sup> *Jam dPal rTsa rGyud*



blessing the vase and so forth. Taking the long version as the basis, you can make it as short as you wish by leaving out certain things. Instead of doing the five types of Buddha initiations one by one, you can do them as a group. Any self-initiation you do involves taking the bodhisattva and tantric vows. So in this way you can become pure again. So if you do self initiation every day, especially at the end of the day, you will have a pure life.

Even if the five lay vows of pratimoksha have been broken completely, they can be taken again. This was taught by the great, enlightened Tibetan lama, Kachen Yeshe Gyeltsen, who is well known for preserving the Vinaya teachings and who, like the sun rising in the world, extensively benefited the teachings and sentient beings in Tibet and wrote vast volumes of texts.

There is also the extremely powerful purification practice called "Confession of the Bodhisattvas Downfalls by reciting the names of the 35 Buddhas". Lama Tsongkhapa's practice before going to bed was to prostrate and recite the names of the 35 Buddhas thirty-five times. Then, being a very pure Bhikshu, he went to bed.

There are different ways of purifying the negative *karma*<sup>7</sup> and the pratimoksha downfalls<sup>8</sup>. The negative *karma* can be

purified by those means I have mentioned before. There are six methods of purifying negative *karma*, as noted in the Lam Rim Chen Mo in the section on *karma*. The monks and nuns pratimoksha downfalls are only purified by doing the fortnightly ritual known as "so jong"<sup>9</sup> (the Tibetan term *gso* means "restore" and *sbyong* means "purify").

According to His Holiness Trijang Rinpoche and Song Rinpoche, for those who have taken thirty-six vows or full ordination, if in case one has broken the root vows, and if one feels unbelievable regret by having done that, to the point where it is so unbearable that it is almost like going mad, for someone like that who has such strong renunciation, they are granted ordination again. This is not according to all the lamas, only some lamas. Of course one should not pretend; and if some people because I have said this, who don't have that quality I mentioned of unbearableness in the mind almost like going crazy, but pretend to on the outside, seek ordination – then ordination cannot be granted. ❀

From Lama Zopa Rinpoche, scribe Tenzin Dechen Rochard, Ven. Yangchen and Ven. Tsenla, edited by Tenzin Dechen Rochard, at Deer Park Buddhist Centre, Wisconsin, USA, July 2007.

<sup>7</sup> *sdik pa*   <sup>8</sup> *ltung ba*   <sup>9</sup> *gso sbyong*



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