

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

[Je Tsongkapa's *Great Book on the Steps of the Path*, folios 37a--40a, a commentary upon selections from the *King of All Prayers, the Prayer of the Realized One, Deeds of All Goodness*, folios 198b-199a]

*, , LAM RIM CHEN MO LAS, ,

From the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path* by Je Tsongkapa:

,SKYONG TSUL MDOR BSDUS TE BSTAN PA LA GNYIS, SKYONG TSUL
DNGOS DANG , DE LA LOG RTOG DGAG PA'O, , DANG PO LA GNYIS LAS,
THUN GYI NGO BO LA JI LTAR BYA BA LA, DANG PO SBYOR BA'I CHOS NI
DRUG STE,

Here we begin a brief presentation of how to practice the steps of the path to Buddhahood. First we will make the actual presentation, and after that refute certain mistaken ideas about the steps. The presentation itself comes in two sections; the first is how to proceed during meditation periods. This starts with Six Preliminaries to meditation.

1A/GSER GLING PA'I RNAM THAR YIN PAS, GNAS KHANG LEGS PAR BYI
DOR BYAS LA SKU GSUNG THUGS KYI RTEN LEGS PAR DGRAM,

[1] Here we are following the descriptions of how Serlingpa practiced during his life. The first preliminary to meditation is to make the room tidy and clean; then set up a beautiful altar, with representations of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind.

2A/MCHOD PA G-YO MED PAR BTZAL LA BKOD PA MDZES PAR BSHAM,

[2] The second preliminary is to go and find offerings that you obtain without using any dishonest means. Put them forth in an attractive arrangement.

3A/DE NAS NYAN SA LAS GNYID RMUGS KYI SGRIB PA LAS SEMS
SBYONG BA'I SKABS SU PHAN TSUN 'CHAG DGOS LA DE LAS GZHAN PA'I
'DOD PA LA 'DUN PA LA SOGS PA'I SGRIB PA RNAMS LAS SEMS SBYONG
BA'I TSE KHRI'AM KHRI'U LA SOGS PA'I STENG DU SKYIL MO KRUNG DU
'KHOD NAS BYA BAR GSUNGS PAS, GNAS MAL BDE BA LA LUS DRANG
POR BSRANG STE SKYIL MO KRUNG NGAM SKYIL MO KRUNG PHYED
DU'ANG RUNG BA'I SPYOD LAM GYIS 'KHOD NAS SKYABS SU 'GRO BA

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

DANG SEMS BSKYED PA RGYUD DANG 'DRES NGES PA ZHIG BYA,

[3] Now the *Levels of Listeners* [by Master Asanga] says that, when you are practicing to purify the mind of the obstacles of sleepiness and fogginess, you should "press them upon each other." It also states that, when you are practicing to purify the mind of other kinds of obstacles, such as attraction to the objects of the senses, you should seat yourself upon a platform or smaller seat and assume the full lotus position. Therefore the third preliminary is to seat yourself on a comfortable cushion, sit up straight, and assume a full lotus position with your legs (a half lotus is also acceptable). In this pose then sink your mind deep into the thoughts of taking refuge, and the wish for enlightenment.

4A/MDUN GYI NAM MKHA' LA RGYA CHEN SPYOD PA DANG ZAB MO
LTA BA'I BRGYUD PA'I BLA MA RNAMS DANG GZHAN YANG SANGS
RGYAS DANG BYANG CHUB SEMS DPA' 'PHAGS PA NYAN THOS DANG
RANG SANGS RGYAS BKA' SDOD DANG BCAS PA DPAG TU MED PA
BZHUGS PAR BSAMS TE TSOGS GSOG PA'I ZHING GSAL GDAB,

[4] The fourth preliminary is to visualize the garden for gathering the power of good. In the space before you, imagine the Lamas of both the far-reaching lineage, and the lineage of the profound view. Together with them are an inconceivable mass of Buddhas, and bodhisattvas, listeners, self-made Buddhas, and protectors of the Dharma.

5A/DE NAS LAM RGYUD LA SKYE BA'I MTHUN RKYEN TSOGS BSAG PA
DANG 'GAL RKYEN SGRIB PA SBYONG BA'I LHAN CIG BYED RKYEN MED
NA NYER LEN GYI RGYU DMIGS RNAM SKYONG BA TZAM LA 'BAD
KYANG LAM SHIN TU SKYE DKA' BAS BSAG SBYANG GI GNAD RNAMS
BSDUS PA'I YAN LAG BDUN PAS RGYUD SBYANG DGOS SO,

[5] It is extremely difficult to bring the path to grow within the stream of your mind if all you practice is the various principal causes. You also need the supporting causes for the path to grow; you need to gather together the different factors that are conducive to the path, and you need to clean yourself of the factors that are obstacles, the ones that oppose the path. Therefore you must train your mind in the Seven Ingredients, which include in them all the critical points for gathering good and cleaning away obstacles.

KA/, DE LA PHYAG 'TSAL BA'I YAN LAG LA SGO GSUM BSDOMS PA'I

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

PHYAG NI, JI SNYED SU DAG CES PA'I TSIGS BCAD GCIG STE, 'JIG RTEN
GYI KHAMs PHYOGS RE BA DANG DUS RE RE'I SANGS RGYAS MA YIN
GYI, PHYOGS BCU KA NA BZHUGS PA DANG SNGAR BYON ZIN PA DANG
MA 'ONGS PA NA 'BYON PAR 'GYUR BA DANG DA LTAR BYUNG BA'I
RGYAL BA THAMS CAD LA DMIGS NAS GZHAN GYI G-YAM LA RGYUG
LTA BU MIN PAR BSAM PA THAG PA NAS SGO GSUM GUS PAS PHYAG
'TSAL BA'O, , DE YANG SANGS RGYAS GCIG LA PHYAG 'TSAL NA'ANG
BSOD NAMS DPAG TU MED PA LA SANGS RGYAS DE TZAM LA DMIGS
NAS PHYAG 'TSAL NA LTA CI SMOS ZHES SLOB DPON YE SHES SDES
'GREL PAR BSHAD DO,

[a] The first ingredient is prostration. There is one kind of prostration that combines all three doors of expression. It is found in the verse [from the *King of All Prayers, the Prayer of the Realized One, Deeds of All Goodness*] that includes the words "Whosoever they are, as many as there may be." [The full verse reads:

, JI SNYED SU DAG PHYOGS BCU'I 'JIG RTEN NA, ,DUS GSUM GSHEGS PA
MI YI SENG GE KUN, ,BDAG GIS MA LUS DE DAG THAMS CAD LA, ,LUS
DANG NGAG YID DANG BAS PHYAG BGYT'O,

I bow down, and purely,
In body and speech and mind,
To all those Lions of living kind,
Whosoever they are,
As many as there may be,
To those Who are Gone;
Gone in the past,
In the present or the future,
On any of the planets
In the ten directions of space.]

Here we are not talking of a Buddha on a certain planet in a certain direction of space, nor are we talking of a Buddha of a particular time; our prostrations rather are directed at each and every Victorious Buddha, those who live in every one of the ten directions of space itself--those who have already come before, those who are going to come in the future, and those who now are here. Don't do your prostrations just to go along with the crowd; do them rather out of deep respect, from the depths of your heart..

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

On this the master Yeshe De, in his commentary, notes that "The good deed you do by prostrating to a single Buddha is beyond any means of measuring. So there's no need to mention what a goodness it is to picture this many Buddhas, and then prostrate yourself to them."

,SGO GSUM SO SO BA'I PHYAG LA LUS KYI PHYAG NI, BZANG PO SPYOD
PA ZHES SOGS TSIGS BCAD GCIG STE, RGYAL BA PHYOGS DANG DUS
KYIS BSDUS PA THAMS CAD YID KYI YUL DU MNGON SUM PA LTAR
DMIGS LA RANG GI LUS ZHING RNAMS KYI RDUL PHRA RAB DANG
GRANGS MNYAM PAR SPRUL LA PHYAG BYA'O, , DE YANG YUL RNAMS
KYI BZANG PO'I SPYOD PA LA RAB TU DAD PA'I STOBS BSKYED DE DES
KUN NAS BSLANGS TE'O, , LUS GCIG GIS PHYAG BYAS PA'ANG BSOD
NAMS CHE NA LUS DE TZAM GYIS PHYAG BYAS PA NI BSOD NAMS SHIN
TU CHE'O ZHES SLOB DPON YE SHES SDE GSUNG NGO ,

This is how we explain what it is to prostrate through each one of the three doors of expression. The first is the prostration in body, and is found in the one verse that includes the lines "Deeds of Goodness" [The full verse reads:

,BZANG PO SPYOD PA'I SMON LAM STOBS DAG GIS, ,RGYAL BA THAMS
CAD YID KYI MNGON SUM DU, ,ZHING GI RDUL SNYED LUS RAB BTUD
PA YIS, ,RGYAL BA KUN LA RAB TU PHYAG 'TSAL LO,

By all the power
Of the prayer of Deeds of Goodness
Each and every Victorious One
Is actually here
Before my mind,
And I bow myself to them
Perfectly,
With bodies that are as many
As the atoms
Of all the worlds
Of the universe.]

Here first picture each and every Victorious One, those of every place, and those of every time; see them in your mind, as if they were actually here before you. Then send forth copies of yourself, bodies that are equal in number to the atoms of all the worlds of the universe, and bow down to them.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

,YID KYI PHYAG NI, RDUL GCIG STENG NA ZHES PA'I TSIGS BCAD GCIG STE, RDUL PHRA RAB RE RE'I STENG NA'ANG RDUL THAMS CAD KYI GRANGS DANG MNYAM PA'I SANGS RGYAS 'KHOR BYANG SEMS KYIS BSKOR BA'I DBUS NA BZHUGS PA LA DE DAG GI YON TAN RJES SU DRAN PA'I MOS PA BSKYED BA'O,

Next is the prostration in mind. This too is found in a single verse, the one with the words "Atop a single atom." [The full verse reads:

,RDUL GCIG STENG NA RDUL SNYEED SANGS RGYAS RNAMS, ,SANGS RGYAS SRAS KYI DBUS NA BZHUGS PA DAG,DE LTAR CHOS KYI DBYINGS RNAMS MA LUS PA, ,THAMS CAD RGYAL BA DAG GIS GANG BAR MOS,

Atop a single atom
Are Buddhas as many
As all the atoms
There are.
Around them are
Their sons and daughters.
I see
Every corner of space,
Each and every place,
Filled like this,
With Victors.]

Imagine every single atom of the universe, and atop each one see Buddhas, as many as all the atoms there are. These Buddhas are surrounded by their followers, all the bodhisattvas. Try to have a feeling where you see, where you sense you are in the presence of, all their incredible good qualities.

,NGAG GI PHYAG NI, DE DAG BSNAGS BA ZHES PA'I TSIGS BCAD GCIG STE, YUL RNAMS KYI YON TAN GYI BSNAGS PA ZAD MI SHES PA RNAMS LUS RE RE LA MGO BO DPAG TU MED PA DANG MGO RE RE LA LCE DPAG TU MED PAR SPRUL BAR GSUNGS PA LTAR BYAS NAS SNYAN PA'I DBYANGS KYIS BRJOD PA'O, , 'DIR DBYANGS NI BSTOD PA YIN LA DE'I YAN

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

LAG NI RGYU STE LCE'O, , RGYA MTSO NI MANG PO'I TSIG

Last is the prostration in speech. This one is found in the single verse which mentions "my words of admiration." [The full verse reads:

GO,DE DAG BSNGAGS PA MI ZAD RGYA MTSO RNAMS, ,DBYANGS KYI
YAN LAG RGYA MTSO'I SGRA KUN GYIS, ,RGYAL BA KUN GYI YON TAN
RAB BRJOD CING , ,BDE BAR GSHEGS PA THAMS CAD BDAG GIS BSTOD,

I sing the praises
Of all those
Who have Gone to Bliss;
I proclaim
The high qualities
Of each and every Victor;
And my words of admiration
Are an ocean that will never dry,
A sea of sound
From the seed of harmony.]

Speak now words of admiration, words that never end, for each of the holy beings before you, in a song of lovely harmony. Do this the way it is described in the other books; turn each head of your bodies into an infinite number of tongues, and sing. Here in the verse the word "harmony" refers to the praises you sing, and their "seed" is what makes them come out; that is, your tongue. The words "sea" and "ocean" express the idea of a multitude.

KHA/, MCHOD PA'I YAN LAG LA BLA NA YOD PA'I MCHOD PA NI, ME
TOG DAM PA ZHES PA'I TSIGS BCAD GNYIS TE, ME TOG DAM PA NI LHA
DANG MI'I YUL LA SOGS PA'I ME TOG RMAD DU BYUNG BA SIL MA
RNAMS SO, , PHRENG BA NI ME TOG SNA TSOGS SPEL TE BRGYUS PA STE
DE GNYIS KA YANG DNGOS DANG BCOS MA THAMS CAD DO, , SIL
SNYAN NI ROL MO RGYUD CAN DANG 'BUD PA DANG BRDUNG BA
DANG DKROL BA RNAMS SO, , BYUG PA NI SPOS ZHIM PO'I LDE GU'O, ,
GDUGS MCHOH NI GDUGS RNAMS KYI MCHOH GO, MAR ME NI SPOS
MAR LA SOGS PA DRI ZHIM ZHING 'OD GSAL BA DANG RIN CHE BA'I
NOR BU 'OD GSAL BA'O, , BDUG PA NI BDUG SPOS SBYAR BA DANG SNA
GCIG PA'O, , NA BZA' DAM PA NI GOS THAMS CAD KYI MCHOH GO, DRI
MCHOH NI SPOS CHU YON CHAB TU GSOL BA ZER TE STONG GSUM DU

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

DRI NGAD LDANG BA'I DRIS BSGOS PA'I CHU LA SOGS PA'O, , PHYE MA
PHUR MA NI SPOS ZHIM PO'I PHYE MA GTOR ZHING BDUG TU RUNG BA
THUM POR BYAS PA'AM DKYIL 'KHOR BRIS PA'I TSON PHYE SPEL BA'I
RIM PA RGYA DANG RENGAMS RI RAB DANG MNYAM PA'O,

[b] This brings us to the second ingredient: offering. The offering which does
have something higher is found in the two verses that contain the words "holy
flowers". [The full verses read:

,ME TOG DAM PA 'PHRENG BA DAM PA DANG , ,SIL SNYAN RNAMS
DANG BYUNG PA GDUGS MCHOG DANG , ,MAR ME MCHOG DANG
BDUG SPOS DAM PA YIS, ,RGYAL BA DE DAG LA NI MCHOD PAR BGYI,

I make offerings
To all of these
Victorious Ones;
Holy Flowers, holy garlands,
Cymbals and ointments,
The highest parasol,
The highest lamp,
And holy incenses.

,NA BZA' DAM PA RNAMS DANG DRI MCHOG DANG , ,PHYE MA PHUR
MA RI RAB MNYAM PA DANG , ,BKOD PA KHYAD PAR 'PHAGS PA'I
MCHOG KUN GYIS, ,RGYAL BA DE DAG LA NI MCHOD PAR BGYI,

I make offerings
To all of these
Victorious Ones;
Holy silken clothing,
The highest scent,
And a mountain of incense powder
High as Meru—
All set forth
In a way more lovely
Than any other thing there is.]

The words "holy flower" refer to the most wondrous blooms of all in the lands of
both pleasure beings and humans; here they are single flowers. "Garlands" are

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

assortments of flowers pressed together on a string. Either way, the flowers can be real ones, or made of other things.

The word "cymbals" refers to all types of music, whether it's on a stringed instrument, a wind instrument, or percussion like drums or cymbals. "Ointments" are thick potions with a delicious smell of incense. The "highest parasol" is the finest of all umbrella-like coverings. The "highest lamp" is one that burns from a fragrant mixture like incense and butter; it shines bright, and gives forth a light as lovely as the flask of a precious gem. The incense mentioned can be either the kind that is a concoction of various sweet-smelling substances, or just one of these substances by itself.

"Holy silken clothing" refers to the finest of all the clothing there is. "Highest scent" means perfumed liquid presented in the form of a water offering; it is made of water, or something similar, imbues with a delicious scent so powerful that it can spread throughout the entire system of a thousand thousand planets. "Incense powder" refers to incense in the form of powder, which you either spread itself or sprinkle atop a fire to make a fragrant smoke. It is in packets, or else laid out in lines like the colored sand used to draw a mandala, in a huge mass as high and wide as Meru, the great mountain in the center of the world.

The phrase "set forth" applies to each of the substances that are being offered; the original Sanskrit word here can mean "majority," or "put forth," or "various."

,BKOD PA NI GONG MA KUN GYI MTHAR SBYOR BA STE PHAL CHE BA
DANG SPRAS PA DANG SNA TSOGS PA LA BYA'O, , MCHOD PA BLA NA
MED PA NI, MCHOD PA GANG RNAMS ZHES PA'I TSIGS BCAD GCIG STE,
BLA NA YOD PA NI 'JIG RTEN PA'I MCHOD PA YIN PAS, 'DIR NI BYANG
CHUB SEMS DPA' LA SOGS PA MTHU CAN RNAMS KYIS BZANG DGU
SPRUL BA'O, , TSIG RKANG PA THA MA GNYIS NI GONG MA DE GNYIS
MA TSANG BA THAMS CAD LA SBYAR TE PHYAG DANG MCHOD PA
RNAMS KYI KUN SLONG DANG YUL STON PA'O,

The other kind of offering is the one which does not have anything higher. This one is found in the single verse which includes the words "Any and every offering." [The full verse reads:

,MCHOD PA GANG RNAMS BLA MED RGYA CHE BA, ,DE DAG RGYAL BA
THAMS CAD LA YANG MOS, ,BZANG PO SPYOD LA DAD PA'I STOBS DAG

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

GIS, ,RGYAL BA KUN LA PHYAG 'TSAL MCHOD PAR BGYI,

I see as well
Any and every offering
Unsurpassed, reaching far and wide,
Handed up to every Victor;
By all the power of my faith
In the Deeds of Goodness may I truly
Bow down and make offerings
Onto all the Victors.]

Offerings which we say "have something higher" are those of worldly beings. Therefore the offerings made in this verse consist of all the many wondrous things that very powerful beings, such as bodhisattvas, are capable of emanating with their mind.

The words of the second half of this verse should be applied anywhere in the verses before where the intent is not stated directly. Their function is to express both the motivation with which the prostration and offering are made, as well as the object towards which they are directed.

GA/, SDIG PA BSHAGS PA'I YAN LAG NI, 'DOD CHAGS ZHES PA'I TSIGS
BCAD GCIG STE, RGYU DUG GSUM LA BR TEN NAS GZHI LUS LA SOGS PA
G SUM GYIS RANG BZHIN NI BDAG GIS BGYIS PA STE DE YANG DNGOS
SU RANG GIS BYA BA DE LA ZHUGS PA DANG GZHAN BYED DU BCUG
PA DANG GZHAN GYIS BYAS PA LA YI RANG BA'O, , DE DAG THAMS
CAD SPYIR BSDUS PA NI, CI MCHIS PA ZHES PA STE, DE DAG GI NYES
DMIGS DRAN NAS SNGA MA LA 'GYOD CING PHYI MA LA BSDAM PA'I
SEMS KYIS SNYING THAG PA NAS BSHAGS NA SNGAR BYAS 'PHEL BA
'CHAD CING PHYI MA RNAMS 'PHRO 'CHAD DO,

[c] The third ingredient is confession, and is found in the single verse with the words "like and dislike". [The full verse reads:

, 'DOD CHAGS ZHE SDANG GTI MUG DBANG GIS NI, ,LUS DANG NGAG
DANG DE BZHIN YID KYIS KYANG , ,SDIG PA BDAG GIS BGYIS PA CI
MCHIS PA, ,DE DAG THAMS CAD BDAG GIS SO SOR BSHAGS,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

I confess, one by one,
Each and every one
Of all the wrong deeds
I may have committed
In action or word,
And also thought,
Motivated by like or dislike,
Or by dark ignorance.]

This refers to what was done with one of the three mental poisons as its cause; and with my body or of the rest as the vehicle; and with a nature of having been committed, either directly by myself, or by someone else at my bidding, or by someone else with my gladness that it was done. The words "all the wrong deeds I may have committed" are meant to include all these elements.

Try to bring to mind all the problems that these deeds will bring you, and so feel regret for whatever you have done in the past, and a sense to restrain yourself in the future. Then make your confession. Doing this prevents any future wrong from starting at all.

NGA/, RJES SU YI RANG BA'I YAN LAG NI, PHYOGS BCU'I RGYAL BA ZHES
PA'I TSIGS BCAD GCIG STE, GANG ZAG LNGA PO DE'I DGE BA'I PHAN
YON DRAN NAS DBUL POS GTER RNYED PA LTAR DGA' BA BSGOM PA'O,

[d] The fourth ingredient is rejoicing, and is found in the one verse with the words "Victors in any of the ten directions." [The full verse reads:

,PHYOGS BCU'I RGYAL BA KUN DANG SANGS RGYAS SRAS, ,RANG
RGYAL RNAMS DANG SLOB DANG MI SLOB DANG , ,GRO BA KUN GYI
BSOD NAMS GANG LA YANG , ,DE DAG KUN KYI RJES SU BDAG YI RANG,

I rejoice
Over every single one
Of the good deeds ever done
By beings in any of the ten directions:
By all of the Victors,
By all of their Sons and Daughters,
By those Self-Made,
By those on the paths of learning,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

By those on the paths done learning,
By anyone at all.]

[d] Try to think about the great goodness that comes from the virtuous deeds of these five different kinds of holy beings, and dwell in a sense of gladness, like a beggar who has stumbled across a mine of gold.

CA/, CHOS 'KHOR BSKOR BAR BSKUL BA'I YAN LAG NI, GANG RNAMS
PHYOGS BCU'I ZHES PA'I TSIGS BCAD GCIG STE, PHYOGS BCU'I ZHING
DU BYANG CHUB TU RNAM PAR SANGS RGYAS TE MA CHAGS SHING
THOGS PA MED PA'I MKHYEN PA BRNYES NAS RING DU MA LON PA
RNAMS LA LUS KYANG DE SNYED DU SPRUL NAS CHOS STON PAR
BSKUL MA GDAB BO, , SLOB DPON YE SHES SDES BYANG CHUB RNAM
PAR SANGS RGYAS ZHES BTON NAS BSHAD PA MDZAD DO,

[e] The fifth ingredient is urging holy ones to turn the Wheel of the Dharma. This is found in the one verse with the words "Who in all the ten directions." [The full verse reads:

,GANG RNAMS PHYOGS BCU'I 'JIG RTEN SGRON MA DAG, BYANG CHUB
RIM PAR SANGS RGYAS MA CHAGS BRNYES, ,MGON PO DE DAG BDAG
GIS THAMS CAD LA, , 'KHOR LO BLA NA MED PA BSKOR BAR BSKUL,

Lamps who light
Each of the worlds
In all the ten directions
Of space;
Those who have taken
Each of the steps
To Buddhahood,
And so reached
The state beyond desire,
The Buddha's enlightenment;
Saviors I urge You all,
Turn the Wheel of the Dharma,
Nothing is higher.]

This verse is addressed to those who in paradises in all the ten directions of space have but only recently found Buddhahood in the Buddha's perfect

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

enlightenment--who have reached the state beyond desire, a knowledge which goes anywhere it wants, unstoppable. We are urging them to send forth an equal number of bodies, to come and teach the Dharma.

The commentary by Yeshe De gives the root text here as "found Buddhahood in the Buddha's perfect enlightenment" [rather than "taken each of the steps to Buddhahood," and I have followed him.]

CHA/, GSOL BA 'DEBS PA'I YAN LAG NI, MYA NGAN 'DA' STON ZHES PA'I
TSIGS BCAD GCIG STE, PHYOGS BCU'I ZHING DU MYA NGAN LAS 'DA'
BA'I TSUL STON PA RNAMS LA 'GRO BA RNAMS LA PHUGS SU PHAN PA
DANG GNAS SKABS SU BDE BA BSKYED PA'I PHYIR DU ZHING KHAMS
KYI RDUL PHRA RAB KYI GRANGS DANG MNYAM PA'I BSKAL PAR MYA
NGAN MI 'DA' BAR BZHUGS PAR LUS DPAG TU MED PAR BYAS TE GSOL
BA GDAB BO,

[f] The sixth ingredient is supplication, and is found in the one verse which contains the words "pretend to pass into nirvana." [The full verse reads:

,MYA NGAN 'DA' STON GANG BZHED DE DAG LA, ,GRO BA KUN LA
PHAN ZHING BDE BA'I PHYIR, ,BSKAL PA ZHING GI RDUL SNYED
BZHUGS PAR YANG , ,BDAG GI THAL MO RAB SBYAR GSOL BAR BGYI,

I press my palms at my breast,
And make this supplication
To all of those who may intend
To pretend to pass into nirvana:
Stay, I pray to help all beings
And bring them to happiness;
Stay for eons equal in number
To the atoms of every world.]

Here we are making supplication to all those in worlds of the ten directions of space who might pretend to pass into nirvana. We are requesting them to stay, ultimately to bring all beings help, and in the interim to give them happiness. We ask them to stay, and not to pass on, for eons equal in their number to all the atoms that make up the various worlds of the universe. We make our supplication, praying that they will remain, in bodies beyond all counting.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

JA/, BSNGO BA'I YAN LAG NI, PHYAG 'TSAL BA DANG ZHES PA'I TSIGS
BCAD DE, GONG GI YAN LAG DRUG GI DGE BAS MTSON NAS DGE RTZA
THAMS CAD SEMS CAN THAMS CAD DANG THUN MONG DU BYAS TE
RDZOGS PA'I BYANG CHUB KYI RGYUR 'DUN PA DRAG POS BSNGOS PAS
NAM YANG MI 'DZAD PA'O, , DE LTAR TSIG DE DAG GI DON GO BAR
BYAS LA YID GZHAN DU MA YENGS PAR DAL BUS JI SKAD BSTAN PA
BZHIN DU BYAS NA BSOD NAMS KYI PHUNG PO DPAG TU MED PA 'DZIN
TO, , DE LTAR NA PHYAG DANG MCHOD PA DANG BSKUL BA DANG
GSOL BA GDAB PA DANG YI RANG DANG LNGA NI MTHUN RKYEN
TSOGS GSOG PA YIN LA, BSHAGS PA NI 'GAL RKYEN SGRIB PA SBYONG
BA DANG YI RANG GI PHYOGS GCIG RANG GI DGE BA BYAS PA LA DGA'
BA BSGOM PA NI RANG GI DGE BA SPEL BAR YANG 'GYUR RO, , BSNGO
BAS NI BSAGS PA DANG SBYANGS PA DANG SPEL BA'I DGE BA RNAMS
NYUNG NGU'ANG CHES MANG BAR SPEL BA DANG GNAS SKABS SU
'BRAS BU PHYUNG STE ZAD PAR 'GYUR BA RNAMS KYANG NAM YANG
MI ZAD PAR BYED PA STE BSDU NA BSAG PA DANG SBYANG BA DANG
SPEL ZHING MI ZAD PAR BYED PA GSUM DU 'DU'O,

[g] The seventh ingredient is dedication, which is found in the verse with the words "prostrations and..." [The full verse reads:

,PHYAG 'TSAL BA DANG MCHOD CING BSHAGS PA DANG , ,RJES SU YI
RANG BSKUL ZHING GSOL BA YI, ,DGE BA CUNG ZAD BDAG GIS CI
BSAGS PA, ,THAMS CAD BDAG GIS BYANG CHUB PHYIR BSNGO'O,

I dedicate
To my future enlightenment
All my merit,
Whatever little goodness
I may have gathered here
By bowing myself and offering,
By confessing and rejoicing,
By urging and supplication.]

Here we are taking all the virtuous seeds within us, represented by the goodness we have accomplished in practicing the six ingredients that have already come, and dedicating them as a cause for the full enlightenment of ourselves and every living being, together. Make this dedication with tremendous will, and the

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

power of your good will flow forever, and never finish.

Read this prayer as I have taught you to here; understand what each verse means, and say it out slowly, without letting your mind wander to something else. If you can do this, then you will gain a great mountain of good deeds, beyond any kind of measuring.

Five of the ingredients we have listed here--prostrating, offering, urging, supplicating, and rejoicing--help you to gather together the different factors that are conducive to the path. One of them, confessing, helps you clean yourself of the factors that are obstacles, ones that oppose the path. One part of rejoicing--dwelling in a sense of gladness over the good you have done yourself--also functions to multiply your virtue.

Dedication works to multiply, fantastically, even the minor good deeds you have done in the acts of gathering, and cleaning, and multiplying. It also takes good deeds that are short-term, those that are going to give a good result and then disappear, and changes them so that they will never be exhausted. In brief, it functions in all three ways: to gather, to clean, and to multiply such that goodness never ends.

6A/, DE NAS DMIGS PA GSAL BAR BYAS NAS MnAdL PHUL TE, BSHES
GNYEN LA MA GUS PA NAS BDAG GNYIS SU MTSAN MAR 'DZIN PA'I BAR
GYI PHYIN CI LOG GI BLO SNA MTHA' DAG MYUR DU 'GAG PA DANG ,
BSHES GNYEN LA GUS PA NAS BDAG MED PA'I DE KHO NA NYID RTOGS
PA'I BAR GYI PHYIN CI MA LOG PA'I BLO SNA THAMS CAD BDE BLAG TU
SKYE BA DANG , PHYI DANG NANG GI BAR CHAD THAMS CAD NYE BAR
ZHI BAR BYIN GYIS BRLAB TU GSOL, ZHES LAN MANG DU 'DUN PA
DRAG POS GSOL BA GDAB PAR BYA'O,

For the sixth and final preliminary, refresh your visualization, and make an offering of a mandala. Then make a request that the Lamas bless the stream of your mind. Ask Them to help you stop, quickly, everything from disrespecting your Spiritual Guide on up to grasping to some ingrained self- nature, in either of its two forms. Ask Them to help you develop, smoothly, every single kind of thought which is perfect and unmistaken; everything from respect for your Spiritual Guide, on up to the realization of suchness, the fact that nothing has any nature of its own. And ask them finally to help you put a final end to all the things, within you or outside of you, that might obstruct your spiritual progress.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Make this supplication over and over, many times, with fierce hopes for its success.

[The following selection is taken from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path* (*Lam-rim chen-mo*) written by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).]

ZHI GNAS KYI TSOGS,

The Conditions for Developing Quietude

*, , LAM RIM CHEN MO LAS,

[From the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path*:]

,SO SO'I BSLAB TSUL LA GSUM, ZHI GNAS LA BSLAB TSUL, LHAG MTHONG LA BSLAB TSUL, DE GNYIS ZUNG DU 'BREL BA'I TSUL LO, , DANG PO LA GSUM, ZHI GNAS KYI TSOGS BSTEN PA, DE LA BR TEN NAS ZHI GNAS BSGOM PA'I TSUL, BSGOMS PAS ZHI GNAS GRUB PA'I TSAD DO, , DANG PO NI RNAL 'BYOR PAS THOG MAR BDE ZHING MYUR DU ZHI GNAS 'GRUB PAR 'GYUR BA'I RGYU ZHI GNAS KYI TSOGS LA BR TEN PAR BYA'O, , 'DI LA DRUG LAS,

The explanation of how to train yourself in each of the two [quietude and special sight] has three parts: how to train yourself in quietude, how to train yourself in special sight, and how the two are joined in union. The first of these parts itself has three sections: how to gather together the conditions for quietude, how to meditate on quietude after you have gathered together these conditions, and how to know when your meditation has actually brought you to quietude. The first is described in the words, "Holy practitioners should first gather together the conditions for quietude: the causes that will allow them to develop quietude quickly and easily." Here there are six different conditions.

1A/MTHUN PA'I YUL NA GNAS PA NI, YON TAN LNGA DANG LDAN PA'I YUL TE, ZAS GOS LA SOGS PA TSEGS MED PAR RNYED PAS RNYED SLA BA DANG , GCAN GZAN LA SOGS PA'I SKYE BO MI BSRUN PA DANG

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

DGRA LA SOGS PA MI GNAS PAS GNAS BZANG BA DANG , NAD MI
BSKYED PA'I SA YIN PAS SA BZANG BA DANG , TSUL KHRIMS DANG LTA
BA MTSUNGS PA'I GROGS DANG LDAN PAS GROGS BZANG BA DANG ,
NYIN MO SKYE BO MANG PO MED CING MTSAN MO SGRA CHUNG BAS
LEGS PAR LDAN PA'O,

[1] The first condition is to do your meditation staying in a place which is conducive for it. The place should have five different qualities:

- a) It should be a place with things that are "easy to find," in the sense that you can find food, clothing, and other necessities without any trouble.
- b) It should be a "good place," in the sense that there are no fearful creatures like wild animals or the like, nor any persons like enemies who would try to harm you.
- c) It should have a "good environment," in the sense that the environment doesn't cause any kinds of sickness to develop in you.
- d) There should be "good friends" there, in the sense that your companions in the place share your sense of morality, and your world view.
- e) The place should "have goodness," in the sense that, during the day, there should not be many people around and, during the night, there should not be many sounds.

,MDO SDE'I RGYAN LAS KYANG , ,BLO LDAN GANG DU BSGRUB PA'I YUL,
,LEGS PAR RNYED DANG GNAS BZANG DANG , ,SA BZANG BA DANG
GROGS BZANG DANG , ,RNAL 'BYOR BDE BA'I YO BYAD LDAN, ,ZHES
GSUNGS SO,

As the Jewel of the Sutras says,

The place where intelligent people practice
Should have things that are good to find,
It should be a good place, with a good environment,
A place where good friends stay,
With all the practitioner needs, with ease.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

2A/, 'DOD PA CHUNG BA NI, CHOS GOS LA SOGS PA BZANG PO'AM
MANG PO LA LHAG PAR CHAGS PA MED PA'O,

[2] The second condition is that you keep your wants few; you have no great attachment to things like fine robes, or a lot of things, or the like.

3A/, CHOG SHES PA NI, CHOS GOS LA SOGS PA NGAN NGON TZAM
RNYED PAS RTAG TU CHOG SHES PA'O,

[3] The third condition is that you are easily satisfied; you always feel like you have enough, even if all you can find is robes or the like that are the worst.

4A/, BYA BA MANG PO YONGS SU SPANGS PA NI, NYO TSONG LA SOGS
PA'I BYA BA NGAN PA DANG KHYIM PA DANG RAB BYUNG RNAMS
DANG HA CANG 'DRIS BSHEB BYED PA DANG SMAN BYED PA DANG
SKAR MA BRTZI BA SOGS YONGS SU SPANGS PA'O,

[4] The fourth condition is that you give up trying to do too many things. You give up undesirable actions like business; you avoid being too familiar with laymen or monks; you stop practicing the minor arts of medicine, astrology, or the like.

5A/, TSUL KHRIMS RNAM PAR DAG PA NI, SO THAR DANG BYANG SEMS
KYI SDOM PA GNYIS KA LA RANG BZHIN DANG BCAS PA'I KHA NA MA
THO BA'I BSLAB BYA'I GZHI MI 'DRAL BA DANG BAG MED PAS RAL
NA'ANG SKYEN PAR 'GYOD PAS CHOS BZHIN DU PHYIR 'CHOS PAR
BYED PA'O,

[5] The fifth condition is that your morality is perfectly pure. With regard to your vows of individual freedom, and your bodhisattva vows, you never break down the foundation of your training, the things you have been taught that are naturally wrong to do, and those that the Buddha has prohibited. If out of a lack of attention you do commit such deeds, you are quick to regret them, and you try to make up in the proper way.

6A/, 'DOD PA LA SOGS PA'I RNAM RTOG YONGS SU SPANGS PA NI, 'DOD
PA RNAMS LA GSOD PA DANG 'CHING BA LA SOGS PA TSE 'DI'I NYES
DMIGS DANG NGAN 'GROR 'GRO BA SOGS PHYI MA'I NYES DMIGS

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

BSGOMS NAS SAM, YANG NA 'KHOR BA'I DNGOS PO YID DU 'ONG MI
'ONG THAMS CAD NI 'JIG PA'I CHOS CAN MI RTAG PA STE NGES PAR DE
DAG THAMS CAD DANG BDAG RING POR MI THOGS PAR 'BRAL BAR
'GYUR NA BDAG DE LA CI ZHIG LHAG PAR CHAGS PA LA SOGS PAR
'GYUR SNYAM DU BSGOMS LA 'DOD PA'I RNAM RTOG THAMS CAD
SPANG BAR BYA'O,

[6] The sixth condition is that you totally rid yourself of the stupid thoughts of desire and the rest. You meditate on the problems of desire in this life--how it can bring you to death, and to bondage; and you meditate on the problems it brings you in the life after--a birth in the realms of misery, or the like. Or else you can meditate on how each and every one of these pretty things in the suffering cycle of life is going to end; how quickly it disappears; how surely it will be torn from me before very long. Try then to get accustomed to thoughts like this: So why do I find myself caring at all about these things? What use are they for me? Use these to rid yourself of every stupid thought of desire.

, 'DI DAG NI SGOM RIM BAR PA'I DGONGS PA LTAR BSHAD PA STE,
RGYAS PAR NI NYAN THOS KYI SA LAS SHES PAR BYA'O, , DE LTA BU'I
CHOS DRUG NI TING NGE 'DZIN BZANG PO GSAR DU SKYE BA DANG
SKYES ZIN PA MI NYAMS PAR GNAS PA DANG GONG NAS GONG DU
'PHEL BA'I RGYU RKYEN GYI GNAD BSDUS PA STE, KHYAD PAR DU TSUL
KHRIMS DAG PA DANG 'DOD PA LA NYES DMIGS SU BLTA BA DANG
MTHUN PA'I YUL NA GNAS PA GTZO BO YIN NO,

I have explained all these following the *Stages of Meditation*; for a more detailed presentation, you can refer to the *Levels of Listeners*. These six include in them all the essential points, all the causes and conditions you need to know to first develop good concentration; and to keep from losing it once you have developed it; and to bring it to an ever higher and higher state. The most important points here are that you keep your morality pure, and that you realize all the problems of desire, and that you stay in a place which is conducive to meditation.

, DGE BSHES STON PA'I ZHAL NAS, RANG CAG MAN NGAG KHO NAS
LAN SNYAM YIN MAN NGAG KHO NA BTZAL BAS TING NGE 'DZIN
SKYER MI 'DOD PA DE TSOGS LA GNAS PA MED PAS LAN PA YIN GSUNG
STE, TSOGS NI SNGAR BSHAD PA DRUG LA SOGS PA YIN NO,

Geshe Tonpa has said, "When we find ourselves unable to develop deep

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

concentration, we blame it on the instructions we got, and we go and look for some different ones. The real reason though is that we fail to do the gathering." Here "gathering" refers to the six conditions and so on that I have explained above.

,GZHAN YANG PHAR PHYIN DANG PO BZHI NI LNGA PA BSAM GTAN
GYI TSOGS SU 'GRO BA YIN TE, SGOM RIM DANG PO LAS, ZHI GNAS NI
RNYED PA LA SOGS PA 'DOD PA LA MI BLTA ZHING TSUL KHRIMS LA
LEGS PAR GNAS LA SDUG BSNAL LA SOGS PA DANG DU LEN PA'I
NGANG TSUL CAN DU GYUR LA BRTZON 'GRUS BRTZAMS NA MYUR DU
'GRUB BO, , DE BAS NA 'PHAGS PA DGONGS PA NGES PAR 'GREL BA LA
SOGS PA LAS KYANG SBYIN PA LA SOGS PA GONG MA GONG MA'I RGYU
NYID YIN PAR BSTAN TO, , ZHES GSUNGS SO,

We can also say that the first four of the perfections function as conditions for the fifth perfection, of meditation. The first book of the *Stages of Meditation* says,

If you want to reach quietude quickly, then make great effort: don't be concerned with a desire for things; keep your morality well; and be ready to undergo whatever pain or such you must. This is in fact why texts like the exalted *Commentary of the True Thought* teach that giving and the rest are causes for each of the perfections above them.

,LAM SGRON LAS KYANG , ,ZHI GNAS YAN LAG RNAM NYAMS PAS, ,RAB
TU 'BAD DE BSGOMS BYAS KYANG , ,LO NI STONG PHRAG DAG GIS
KYANG , ,TING 'DZIN 'GRUB PAR MI 'GYUR RO, ,ZHES GSUNGS PAS,

A Lamp for the Path says as well,

You may try meditation as hard as you can,
But if the parts of quiet are lost
You may sit and practice for thousands of years
And never achieve this deep concentration.

ZHI LHAG GI TING NGE 'DZIN SNYING THAG PA NAS BSGRUB PAR 'DOD
PA RNAMS KYIS ZHI GNAS KYI YAN LAG GAM TSOGS NYAN SA NAS
GSUNGS PA'I BCU GSUM LA SOGS PA LA 'BAD PA SHIN TU GAL CHE'O,

Therefore those who are really serious about achieving the state of concentration

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

where quietude ("quiet") and special sight are joined must make special efforts in the various "parts" or conditions of concentration, for example in the thirteen conditions outlined in the Levels of Listeners. These conditions are absolutely vital for your success.

[The following selection on the proper way to sit for meditation is taken from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path to (Lam-rim chen-mo, ACIP electronic text S5392)*, written by Lord Tsongkapa (1357-1419).]

,DE LA BR TEN NAS ZHI GNAS BSGOM PA'I TSUL LA GNYIS, SBYOR BA DANG , DNGOS GZHI'O, ,

Here then is the section on how to meditate on quietude, once one has assembled all the proper circumstances. There are two parts here: the preparation, and then the actual meditation.

DANG PO NI, SNGAR BSHAD PA'I SBYOR BA'I CHOS DRUG DANG KHYAD PAR DU BYANG CHUB KYI SEMS RING DU BSGOM ZHING DE'I YAN LAG TU SKYES BU CHUNG 'BRING DANG THUN MONG BA'I DMIGS PA'I NGO BO RNAMS KYANG SBYANG BAR BYA'O, ,

Here is the first of the two. As a preparation, one should begin with the six preliminary practices presented above. One should, most especially, meditate for an extended period of time on the Wish for enlightenment. As an auxiliary to this meditation, one should finally train oneself in the subjects that are shared with people of lesser and medium capacities.

,GNYIS PA LA GNYIS, LUS KYI SPYOD LAM JI 'DRA BAS BSGOM PA DANG , BSGOM PA'I RIM PA NYID BSHAD PA'O, , DANG PO NI,

Meditating itself can be presented in two parts: an explanation of how one should position one's body during meditation, and an explanation of the actual steps of meditation itself.

SGOM RIM BAR PA DANG THA MA LAS GSUNGS PA LTAR STAN SHIN TU 'JAM PO BDE BA LA LUS KYI KUN SPYOD CHOS BRGYAD DANG LDAN PAR BYA'O, ,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

The middle and the final books of the Steps of Meditation explain how one should position one's body; that is, one should sit on a very soft and comfortable meditation cushion, in a position with eight different features.

DE LA RKANG PA NI RJE BTZUN RNAM PAR SNANG MDZAD KYI SKYIL
MO KRUNG LTA BU SKYIL MO KRUNG YONGS SU RDZOGS PA'AM YANG
NA SKYIL KRUNG PHYED PA'ANG RUNG STE DE LTAR BYA'O, ,

[1] As for the legs, one should sit in a full lotus, similar to the full-lotus position of the holy being named Vairochana. It is also quite acceptable to sit in a half lotus position.

MIG NI HA CANG YANG MI DBYE HA CANG YANG MI ZUM PAR SNA'I
RTZE MOR GTAD DO, ,

[2] One's eyes should be loosely focussed around the plane of the tip of the nose, and neither opened too wide nor completely closed.

LUS NI HA CANG YANG RGYAB TU MI DGYE HA CANG YANG MDUN DU
MI DGU BAR DRANG POR BSRANGS LA DRAN PA NANG DU BZHAG STE
'DUG PAR BYA'O, ,

[3] Avoid having your body lean too far back or too far forward: straighten up your spine, and sit there directing your thoughts within.

PHRAG PA NI THAD KAR MNYAM PAR BZHAG GO,

[4] The shoulders should be even, on a straight line.

MGO NI MI MTHO MI DMA' ZHING PHYOGS GCIG TU MA YO BAR BZHAG
STE SNA NAS LTE BAR DRANG POR BZHAG GO,

[5] The head should be kept erect: neither tilted down nor up, nor pointed off to the side. The nose should draw a straight line to the navel.

SO DANG MCHU NI RANG LUGS SU THA MAL PAR BZHAG GO,

[6] Leave your teeth and your lips in their normal, natural position.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

LCE NI YA SO'I DRUNG DU GZHAR RO, ,

[7] The tongue should be kept close to the palate, behind your upper teeth.

DBUGS NI PHYI NANG DU RGYU BA SGRA CAN DANG RNGAMS PA
DANG RGOD BAG CAN DU MI BTANG GI, CI NAS KYANG PHAR RGYU
TSUR RGYU MI TSOR BAR DAL BU DAL BUS 'BAD PA MED PAR 'JUG PA DE
LTAR BYA'O, ,

[8] As for the breath, see that it makes no noise as you breathe it in. Don't let it be too rough, and don't just remain thoughtless about it. Try to reach a point where you can hardly tell when it is coming and going; where it runs very slowly and effortlessly.

NYAN SAR SANGS RGYAS KYIS GNANG BA'I KHRI'AM KHRI'U'AM RTZVA
BTING BA'I STENG DU SKYIL MO KRUNG BCAS TE 'DUG PA LA RGYU
MTSAN LNGA GSUNGS TE,

In the *Levels of Listeners*, five different reasons are given for sitting in a cross-legged position on a platform or seat of the kind allowed by Lord Buddha, and covered with comfortable straw or grass.

LUS LEGS PAR BSGRIMS NA SPYOD LAM DE SHIN TU SBYANGS PA SKYE
BA DANG RJES SU MTHUN PAS MYUR BA MYUR BAR SHIN TU SBYANGS
PA SKYE BA DANG ,

When you position your body a bit strictly, it is quite conducive to reaching the state of practiced ease; as a result, you will then be able to reach practiced ease very quickly.

'DUG PAS DUS YUN RING PO 'DA' BAR BYED NUS SHING SPYOD LAM DES
DE'I LUS SHIN TU NGAL BAR MI 'GYUR BA DANG ,

When you sit this way, you find yourself able to sit for a long period of time. It also helps to prevent you from feeling tired.

SPYOD LAM DE MU STEGS DANG PHAS KYI RGOL BA DAG DANG THUN
MONG MA YIN PA DANG ,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Another advantage is that this position is unique to Buddhists, and cannot be confused with the position of non-Buddhists in general, or of those whom you may be debating.

GZHAN GYIS SPYOD LAM DES 'DUG PA MTHONG NA SHIN TU DANG BA
SKYE BA DANG ,

Whenever someone else sees you sitting in this position, then they start to have deep feelings of faith in you.

SPYOD LAM DE SANGS RGYAS DANG SANGS RGYAS KYI NYAN THOS
RNAMS KYIS GNANG ZHING BSTEN PA STE RGYU MTSAN DE LNGA
MTHONG NAS SKYIL MO KRUNG BCAS TE GNAS PAR GSUNGS SO, ,

This position, finally, is one that Lord Buddha, and the disciples of Lord Buddha, have granted us, and have used themselves. Understanding these five reasons for doing so, states the text, one should determine to sit in a cross-legged position.

LUS DRANG POR BSRANG BA NI RMUGS PA DANG GNYID MI 'BYUNG
BA'I DON DU GSUNGS SO, ,

It is stated as well that the purpose of sitting up very straight is that this prevents mental foginess and sleepiness.

DE LTAR NA THOG MAR LUS KYI KUN SPYOD BRGYAD DANG KHYAD
PAR DU RLUNG CHAM LA DBAB PA JI LTAR BSHAD PA BZHIN BSGRUB
PAR BYA'O, ,

Practice then as we have explained it: start by putting your body into the meditation position, and remember especially to bring your breathing down first.

[The following selection is taken from the Great Book on the Steps of the Path (Lam-rim chen-mo) written by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).]

*, , SEMS GNAS DGU, ,

The Nine States of Meditation

GSUM PA DE LA BR TEN NAS SEMS GNAS DGU SGRUB TSUL NI, SGOM BYED PAR 'DOD NA SEMS GNAS LA MYONG BA THON PA DGOS, DE LA SEMS GNAS DGU SHES DGOS, DE YANG SEMS 'JOG PA, RGYUN DU 'JOG PA, GLAN TE 'JOG PA, NYE BAR 'JOG PA, DUL BAR BYED PA, ZHI BAR BYED PA, RNAM PAR ZHI BAR BYED PA, RTZE GCIG TU BYED PA, MNYAM PAR 'JOG PA STE DGU LAS,

Here is the third division, which is a description of how one achieves the nine states of meditation using the steps explained above. Anyone who hopes to practice meditation must become proficient in these nine states; and to become proficient in them, one must know what they are. So here is an explanation of the nine states, which are called (1) placing the mind on the object; (2) placing the mind on the object with some continuity; (3) placing the mind on the object and patching the gaps; (4) placing the mind on the object closely; (5) controlling the mind; (6) pacifying the mind; (7) pacifying the mind totally; (8) making the mind single-pointed; and (9) achieving equilibrium.

DANG PO NI, BLA MA LAS DMIGS PA'I GDAMS NGAG THOS STOBS KYIS 'GRUB CING , DE YANG DMIGS PA LA BZHAG TZAM BZHAG TZAM LAS SHAS CHER MI GNAS PAS RGYUN MTHUD MI THUB PA STE, DE'I TSE SEMS LA RTOG DPYOD ZHUGS PA'I STOBS KYIS 'PHRO RGOD KYI DBANG DU SHOR BA RIGS PAS SNGAR LAS RNAM RTOG SHAS CHE BA'I NYAMS 'BYUNG YANG , 'DI RNAM RTOG MANG DU SONG BA MIN GYI, RNAM RTOG NGOS ZIN PA'I NYAMS YIN,

Here is the first state of meditation, called "placing the mind on the object." You achieve this state by means of receiving instructions from your lama about the object you should use for your meditation. The mind at this point stays on the object only from time to time, and for the most part is not fixed on the object at all: you are unable to keep your mind on the object for any continuous length of time. The two mental functions of noting and examining are present, and due to this you often lose yourself to scattering and agitation. You become aware of this condition and so you get the impression that you have even a greater problem of too many thoughts coming up to your mind than you ever had before. What's really happening though is not that you have more of these thoughts than before; it's just that you have now become aware of the problem.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

GNYSIS PA NI DE LTAR BSGOMS PAS SEMS DMIGS PA LA BZHAG TZAM
GYIS RGYUN CUNG ZAD MTHUD THUB PA NI DPER NA MA NI PHRENG
SKOR GCIG TZAM GYI RING BSGOM NA DE'I RING MI GA YENG BA
'BYUNG BA LTA BU YIN, 'DI'I TSE SKABS RE RNAM RTOG ZHI ZHING
SKABS RE RNAM RTOG SKYE BAS RNAM RTOG NGAL BSO BA'I NYAMS
'ONG, 'DI BSAM PA'I STOBS KYIS 'GRUB,

Here is the second state of meditation, called "placing the mind on the object with some continuity." This state is reached when you practice placing the mind on the object enough that you can now keep your mind on it for some continuous, although brief, period of time. You could say it would be like being able to keep your mind from wandering for as long as it would take to do one round of the *mani* mantra on your rosary. At this point your problem of having too many thoughts goes away for a while, and then comes back for a while, so the impression you have is that these thoughts are making a periodic resurgence. This particular state of meditation is achieved through contemplating.

SEMS GNAS DANG PO DANG GNYIS PA 'DI GNYIS LA BYING RGOD
MANG ZHING GNAS PA NYUNG BAS YID BYED BZHI'I DANG PO BSGRIMS
TE 'JUG PA'I SKABS YIN ZHING GNAS PA LAS GA YENG BA RGYUN RING
BA YIN GSUNGS,

During these first two states of meditation, you have an abundance of dullness and agitation, and only occasionally fix your mind on the object. Therefore at this point we say that your mind is in the first of the four mental modes, the one described as having to "concentrate to focus." During these stages, said our Lama, the periods of distraction last longer than the periods in which the mind is fixed on the object.

GSUM PA NI, GOS LTA BU'I GZHI LA LHAN PA BRGYAG PA BZHIN,
RGYUN MTHUD PA'I GZHI DE'I STENG NAS SEMS DMIGS PA LAS GA
YENG PA 'PHRAL DU SHES NAS SLAR DMIGS RTEN LA GLAN TE 'JOG PA
LA ZER BAS 'DI DANG SNGA MA GNYIS LA GA YENG BA YUN RING
THUNG YOD, 'DI'ANG DRAN PA STOBS LDAN BSKYED PA'I DUS YIN
GSUNGS,

Here is the third state of meditation, called "placing the mind on the object and patching the gaps." The place where you put a normal patch is a piece of cloth;

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

here the place you put the patch is the continuation of your focus. What this means is that you catch your mind quickly after it wanders away from the object, and so "patch" the hole in the continuation. The difference between this state of meditation and the two that come before it is in the length of time you are distracted. Our Lama also noted that this is the time when you are able to develop your recollection to a high degree.

BZHI PA NI, DRAN PA SHUGS CAN DU BSKYED NAS DMIGS RTEN LA 'JOG PA STE, 'DI NAS DMIGS RTEN SHOR MI SRID PAS SNGA MA GSUM LAS KHYAD ZHUGS PA YIN, 'ON KYANG DMIGS RTEN MA SHOR BZHIN DU BYING RGOD SHUGS CHEN PO 'BYUNG BAS BYING RGOD KYI GNYEN PO BSTEN DGOS, SEMS GNAS GSUM PA DANG BZHI PA 'DI GNYIS DRAN PA'I STOBS KYIS 'GRUB, 'DI NAS NAR SON PA'I MI LTAR DRAN PA NAR SON PA'AM, DRAN PA'I STOBS RDZOGS PA YIN GSUNGS,

Here is the fourth state of meditation, called "placing the mind on the object closely." Since by now your recollection is highly developed, you are able to place your mind on the object of meditation in such a way that it is no longer possible to lose it completely; this then is what differentiates this state from the three before it. Even though you are succeeding in keeping the object from being lost, nonetheless dullness and agitation are present in your mind, and they are very strong. Therefore you must at this point apply the correction for dullness and agitation. These two levels, the third and fourth, are achieved by means of recollection. Our Lama noted that from this point on the power of our meditation was complete, or full-grown, like a person who has reached maturity.

LNGA PA NI, BZHI PA'I SKABS SU SEMS NANG DU BSDUS DRAGS PAS 'DIR BYING BA PHRA MO'I NYEN CHE BAS SHES BZHIN STOBS LDAN BSKYED NAS, DES BYA RA BYAS TE TING NGE 'DZIN GYI YON TAN BSAMS NAS SEMS GZENGs BSTOD, 'DI DANG SNGA MA GNYIS LA BYING RGOD RAGS PA 'BYUNG MI 'BYUNG GI KHYAD YOD,

Here is the fifth state of meditation, called "controlling the mind." There is a tendency during the fourth state to draw your mind too far inside, and there is a great danger that this can lead to subtle dullness. Therefore we must now develop our watchfulness to a high degree. It goes and spies on the mind, and finds something wrong; in response then we must uplift the mind by thinking over the many benefits that single-mindedness can bring to us. The difference between this state and those before it is whether or not obvious dullness can

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

occur.

DRUG PA NI, LNGA PA'I SKABS SU SEMS GZENGS BSTOD DRAGS PA'I RKYEN GYIS 'DIR RGOD PA PHRA MO'I NYEN CHE LA, RGOD PA PHRA MO SKYES PA NA, DE RIG PA'I SHES BZHIN STOBS LDAN BSKYED DE RGOD PA PHRA MO LA'ANG SKYON DU BLTAS NAS 'GOG DGOS, SNGA MA LAS 'DI SKABS BYING BA PHRA MO'I NYEN CHE BA MED PA'I KHYAD YOD, LNGA PA DANG DRUG PA GNYIS SHES BZHIN GYI STOBS KYIS 'GRUB, 'DI NAS SHES BZHIN GYI STOBS RDZOGS PAR GSUNGS,

Here is the sixth state of meditation, called "pacifying the mind." The great danger at this point is that subtle agitation occurs, as a result of uplifting the mind too far while in the fifth state. Whenever this subtle agitation comes, you must raise up a powerful kind of watchfulness to detect it; realize that even very subtle agitation is a serious fault in your meditation, and stop it. What distinguishes this stage from the one before it is whether or not there is a great danger of having subtle dullness. These last two states, the fifth and the sixth, are achieved by means of watchfulness. From this point on, said our Lama, the power of our watchfulness is complete.

BDUN PA'I SKABS SU DRAN SHES KYI STOBS RDZOGS PAS BYING RGOD SKYE DKA' YANG , DE NAS BRTZON 'GRUS KYI STOBS BSKYED DE BYING RGOD PHRA MO LA'ANG SKYON DU BLTAS NAS SPONG GANG THUB BYED DGOS, 'DI DANG SNGA MA GNYIS LA BYING RGOD PHRA MOR SHOR BA'I NYEN DOGS CHER BYED DGOS MI DGOS KYI KHYAD YOD, 'DIR BYING RGOD PHRA MO TZAM GYI NYEN CHER MED KYANG , DA DUNG DE GNYIS SPONG THABS LA NI BRTZON DGOS PA YIN, LNGA PA DANG DRUG PA'I SKABS BYING RGOD KYI TSUR GNOD PA'I DOGS PA YOD LA, BDUN PA'I SKABS 'DIR BYING RGOD BYUNG YANG BRTZON 'GRUS KYIS BKAG THUB PAS BYING RGOD KYIS TSUR BAR DU CHER GCOD MI NUS GSUNGS, SEMS GNAS GSUM PA NAS BDUN PA'I BAR GYI LNGA PO 'DIR TING 'DZIN SHAS CHE YANG BYING RGOD SOGS KYIS BAR DU GCOD PAS CHAD CING 'JUG PA'I YID BYED KYI SKABS YIN,

By the time you reach the seventh state of meditation, which we call "pacifying the mind totally," your recollection and watchfulness are total, and so it is unlikely that dullness and agitation are going to occur. At this point you must bring your effort up to a powerful level; see how destructive even subtle forms of

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

dullness and agitation are, and do whatever you can to eliminate them altogether. The difference between this state and the ones before it is whether or not you should worry much about slipping into subtle dullness or agitation. Although there is no great danger at this point that subtle dullness and agitation will occur, you must still make great effort to implement the various methods for eliminating them. While you are in the fifth and sixth states of meditation, you still have to be concerned whether or not dullness and agitation are going to attack you. Here in the seventh state though you have the ability to initiate the effort necessary to block them; and so, said our Lama, dullness and agitation are unable to attack and create an obstacle. During these last five states of meditation--that is, from the third through to the seventh--the mind is for the most part in single-pointed meditation. Nonetheless, conditions such as dullness and agitation are interrupting ones concentration, and so we describe the mental mode during these periods as "engaging but interrupted."

BRGYAD PA'I SKABS SU NI THOG MAR GNYEN PO DRAN 'DZIN GYI
RTZOL BA CUNG ZAD BSTEN NA THUN GYI RING BYING RGOD PHRA
MO'ANG MED PAR THUN 'KHYONGS THUB PA 'BYUNG ZHING , 'DI DAG
GI SKABS RIM BZHIN DPER NA DGRA BO STOBS DANG LDAN PA DANG ,
STOBS 'GA' ZHIG NYAMS PA DANG , STOBS RDZOGS PAR NYAMS PA
LTAR BYING RGOD KYI STOBS RIM BZHIN NYAMS PA YIN PAS BRGYAD
PA NAS BZUNG SHES BZHIN GYI RTZOL BA BSTEN MI DGOS SO, , SEMS
GNAS BRGYAD PA'I SKABS 'DIR RTZOL BA CUNG ZAD BSTEN NA THUN
GYI RING BYING RGOD SOGS KYIS BAR DU GCOD PA MED PAS CHAD PA
MED PAR 'JUG PA'I YID BYED KYI SKABS YIN, SEMS GNAS BDUN PA
DANG BRGYAD PA BRTZON 'GRUS KYI STOBS KYIS 'GRUB,

Here is what happens when you reach the eighth state of meditation, called "making the mind single-pointed." When you begin a meditation session, you must still make a slight effort to bring up the various corrections. After that though you are able to go for an entire session without even the subtle forms of dullness and agitation coming up in the mind. These last few stages are like having an enemy who is at full strength, one who has lost part of his strength, and one whose strength is completely lost. Since these examples describe how dullness and agitation gradually lose their power, we can say that from the eighth state of meditation you no longer need to make any conscious effort to apply watchfulness. Because in this eighth state you can make a little effort at the opening of a meditation session and then pass the entire period without being interrupted by problems such as dullness and agitation, the mental mode at this

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

point is described as "engaging without interruption." The seventh and eighth states of meditation are achieved through applying effort.

DGU PA NI 'BAD RTZOL DANG BRAL BAR 'JUG PA STE, DE YANG BRGYAD PA'I SKABS YANG YANG 'DRIS PA LA BR TEN NAS 'DIR 'BAD RTZOL MED PAR LHUN GYIS GRUB PA YIN PAS RTZOL BA CUNG ZAD KYANG MI DGOS PAR KHA TON BYANG BA ZHIG GIS 'DON PA BTON PA LTAR TING 'DZIN LA HRIL GYIS 'JUG , DE NI 'DOD SEMS RTZE GCIG PA'I ZHI GNAS RJES MTHUN PA YIN, DGU PA 'DI YONGS SU 'DRIS PA'I STOBS KYIS 'GRUB,

Here is the ninth state of meditation, called "achieving equilibrium." Here your mind is engaging in the object without any conscious effort at all. This state comes about as a result of having repeated the eighth state over and over until you are completely accustomed to it, and then you can go into meditation spontaneously, effortlessly. This is similar to the point you reach in your recitations when you can read out a text from memory without any effort, since you have practiced reciting it repeatedly. You go into single-minded meditation in a single swoop. This state of mind is for all intents and purposes a desire-realm form of single-pointed quietude. The ninth state is achieved through being totally accustomed.

DE DAG GI DANG PO'I SKABS RNAM RTOG NGOS ZIN PA'I NYAMS DANG , GNYIS PA'I SKABS RNAM RTOG RES NGAL BSO BA'I NYAMS, GSUM PA'I SKABS RNAM RTOG THANG CHAD PA'I NYAMS 'BYUNG , MDOR NA SEMS GNAS DANG PO DANG GNYIS PA GNYIS NI GNAS PA RGYUN RING THUNG YOD LA, GNYIS PA DANG GSUM PA NI GA YENG BA RGYUN RING THUNG YOD, GSUM PA BZHI PA GNYIS NI DMIGS RTEN SHOR SRID MI SRID KYI KHYAD PAR YOD CING , BZHI PA DANG LNGA PA NI, BYING BA RAGS PA SKYE MI SKYE DANG , LNGA PA DRUG PA GNYIS NI BYING BA PHRA MO LA DOGS ZON DGOS MI DGOS DANG , DER MA ZAD DRUG PAR RGOD PA PHRA MO SKYE BA'ANG SNGA MA LAS NYUNG NGO, , DRUG PA DANG BDUN PA GNYIS NI, BYING RGOD PHRA MOR SHOR NYEN GYI DOGS ZON CHEN PO DGOS MI DGOS DANG;BDUN PA DANG BRGYAD PA NI BYING RGOD YOD MED DANG , BRGYAD PA DANG DGU PA NI, 'BAD RTZOL LA LTOS MNI LTOS KYI KHYAD YOD DO, , BDUN PA'I SKABS BYING RGOD 'GOG TZAM LAS, DER SHOR DOGS KYI NYEN CHER BYED MI DGOS LA, DPER NA DGRA DANG 'THAB NA, DE STOBS ZHAN DU BTANG ZIN NAS DOGS ZON CHER MI DGOS PAR BKAG TZAM GYIS CHOG PA BZHIN YIN PAR GSUNGS, ,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

The impression you have during the first state is one of recognizing that you have too many thoughts. In the second state you have a feeling that they are making a resurgence. By the third state the impression is that the problem of too many thoughts has in a sense tired out. In brief then we can say that in the first two states there is a question of how long the mind can stay fixed on the object. What distinguishes the third and the fourth states is whether or not one can lose the object or not. The fourth and fifth states are differentiated by whether obvious dullness can arise or not. The fifth and sixth states are separated by whether or not you have to be worried about subtle dullness coming up. Moreover, there is the distinction that--although it is possible for subtle agitation to occur during the sixth state--it is much less likely than in the one before it. The sixth and seventh states are distinguished by whether or not you have to be very concerned about slipping into subtle agitation or dullness. States number seven and eight are separated by whether there is any agitation or dullness at all; and eight and nine are differentiated by whether or not you have to rely on any conscious effort. The seventh level is devoted to eliminating dullness and agitation, rather than having to think about any serious danger that you could slip into them. Our Lama said that at this point it was like having a fist-fight with an enemy who was already weakened to the point of exhaustion; it's not like you need to be on your guard especially, it's enough just to be thinking about how to finish him off.

[Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419), *The Great Book on the Steps of the Path (Lamrim Chenmo)*, folios 118B-120A]

RJES TZONG KHA PA CHEN POS BRTZOMS PA'I LAM RIM CHEN MO LAS,

[The following selection is from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path*, composed by Lord Tsongkapa (1357-1419):

GSUM PA DE DAG GI 'BRAS BU LA GSUM LAS, RNAM SMIN GYI 'BRAS BU NI,

Here is the third section, a presentation on the consequences of the various kinds of bad deeds. We proceed in three parts, beginning with what are called the "ripened" consequences.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

LAS LAM BCU PO RE RE YANG GZHI DUG GSUM CHUNG 'BRING CHE
GSUM LA BR TEN PAS GSUM GSUM MO, , DE LA SROG GCOD SOGS CHEN
PO BCU PO RE RES DMYAL BA, 'BRING BCU PO RE RES YI DVAGS DANG ,
CHUNG NGU BCU PO RE RES DUD 'GROR SKYE BAR SA'I DNGOS GZHIR
GSUNGS LA,

Now each one of the ten paths of karma can itself be divided into three kinds--
lesser, medium, and greater--depending on the intensity of the three poisons.
The *Main Stage of Levels* states that, from the ten greater instances of killing and
the rest, one is born into the hells. It says that from medium instances of each of
the ten you take birth as an insatiable spirit; and from the ten lesser instances,
you are born as an animal.

SA BCU PA'I MDO LAS NI CHUNG 'BRING GNYIS KYI 'BRAS BU LDOG STE
GSUNGS SO,

The *Sutra on the Ten Levels* however states the consequences of two of the kinds of
instances, the lesser and the medium, in reverse of this.

,RGYU MTHUN PA'I 'BRAS BU NI, NGAN 'GRO NAS MIR SKYES KYANG
RIM PA LTAR TSE THUNG BA DANG LONGS SPYOD KYIS PHONGS PA
DANG CHUNG MA MA BSRUNGS PAR 'GYUR BA DANG , SKUR PA MANG
BA DANG MDZA' BO DANG 'BYE BA DANG YID DU MI 'ONG BA'I SGRA
THOS PA DANG GZHAN GYIS TSIG MI NYAN PA DANG , CHAGS SDANG
RMONGS GSUM SHAS CHE BA'O,

The "consistent" consequences are as follows. Even if you do manage to escape
the realms of misery and take birth as a human, the following respective results
occur to you:

- 1) Your life is short.
- 2) You don't have enough to live on.
- 3) You have problems keeping your partner from others.
- 4) People don't believe what you say, even when you're telling the truth.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

- 5) You lose friends easily.
- 6) You hear things as bad sounds.
- 7) No one listens to you.
- 8) Your personality is dominated by desire.
- 9) Your personality is dominated by anger.
- 10) Your personality is dominated by stupidity.

,BDEN PA PO'I LE'U DANG SA BCU PA'I MDO LAS NI DE RE RE LA 'BRAS
BU GNYIS GNYIS GSUNGS TE, GAL TE MIR SKYES NA YANG TSE THUNG
LA NAD MANG BA DANG LONGS SPYOD CHUNG LA LONGS SPYOD
GZHAN DANG THUN MONG BA DANG G-YOG 'KHOR MI BSRUN PA'AM
YID BRTAN DU MI RUNG LA CHUNG MA 'GRAN ZLA DANG BCAS PA
DANG , SKUR PA MANG ZHING GZHAN GYIS BSLU BA DANG 'KHOR MI
'DUM ZHING NGAN PA DANG YID DU MI 'ONG BA THOS SHING 'THAB
MO'I TSIG TU 'GYUR BA DANG TSIG MI BTZUN PA'AM TSIG BZUNG MI 'OS
SHING MA NGES PA'I SPOBS PAR 'GYUR BA DANG , 'DOD PA CHE ZHING
CHOG MI SHES PA DANG MI PHAN PA TSOL BA'AM PHAN PA MI TSOL
BA DANG GZHAN LA GNOD PA BYED PA'AM GZHAN GYIS GNOD PA
BYED PAR 'GYUR BA DANG LTA BA NGAN ZHING G-YO SGYU CAN DU
'GYUR BAR GSUNGS SO,

The *Chapter on the True* and the *Sutra on the Ten Levels* state that there are two such consequences for each of the ones given here; even if you do manage to take birth as a human,

- 1) Your life is short, and you get sick easily.
- 2) You don't have enough to live on, and what you do have is all just common property with others.
- 3) The people who work around you are "inconsistent," which here means unreliable, and you find yourself having a lot of competition for your partner.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

- 4) No one believes what you say, even when you are speaking the truth, and others are always deceiving you.
- 5) The people around you are always fighting against one another, and have an undesirable character.
- 6) You hear many unpleasant things, and when others talk to you it always seems to you as if they want to start a fight.
- 7) No one respects what you say--no one thinks that what you say has any particular value, and you are afflicted with a lack of confidence.
- 8) Your personality is dominated by desire, and you are never satisfied with what you have.
- 9) You are always finding yourself without help, or never find the help you need; and you are always hurting others, or always being hurt by others.
- 10) You become a person who keeps harmful views, or a deceitful person.

,BLA MA GONG MA RNAMS MIR SKYES NA YANG SROG GCOD SOGS DE
DAG LA DGA' BAR 'GYUR BA BYED PA RGYU MTHUN GYI 'BRAS BU
DANG SNGA MA RNAMS MYONG BA RGYU MTHUN GYI 'BRAS BUR
BZHED DO,

Great lamas of the past have expressed the position that it is a consequence of consistent *action* where as a karmic result of killing you become someone who takes pleasure in killing and the rest. It is a consequence of consistent *experience* then when you have to undergo the results just listed. [the second rgyu mthun here is likely a text error for rnam smin; this is the corrected reading].

,BDAG PO'I 'BRAS BU'AM DBANG GI 'BRAS BU NI, SROG BCAD PA LAS
PHYI SNOD KYI 'JIG RTEN GYI BZA' BTUNG DANG SMAN DANG 'BRAS BU
LA SOGS PA MTHU CHUNG BA DANG BSNYEMS PA DANG NUS PA DANG
STOBS CHUNG BA DANG 'JU DKA' ZHING NAD BSKYED PAS SEMS CAN
PHAL CHER TSE MA ZAD PAR YANG 'CHI BAR 'GYUR BA DANG,

Next is what we call the "environmental" or "dominant" consequence. Here for

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

example the consequence of killing expresses itself in the outer world around you. Food, drink, medicine, the crops in the fields, and other such things have very little power; they are always inferior; they have little nutrition or potency; they are hard to digest, and they cause disease in you. Because of this the majority of the living beings around you die before reaching the end of a full life.

MA BYIN PAR LEN PA'I NI, 'BRAS BU NYUNG BA DANG 'BRAS BU MI GRUNG PA DANG 'BRAS BU 'GYUR BA DANG 'BRAS BU LONG BA DANG THAN PA CHES PA DANG CHAR CHES PA DANG 'BRAS BU SKAMS PA DANG MED PAR 'GYUR BA DANG ,

Because you have stolen, then the crops are few and far between; the crops have no power to remove hunger; they spoil; they never come up; dry spells stay on too long; it rains too much; the crops dry up, or die off.

LOG G-YEM GYI NI, BSHANG GCI DANG 'DAM RDZAB DANG LJAN LJIN DANG MI GTZANG BA DANG DRI NGA BA MANG BA DANG NYAM NGA BA DANG NYAMS MI DGA' BA'O,

Because you have done wrong sex, you live in a place where there is piss and shit all around, and mud and dirt and filth, and everything stinks, and everywhere seems unpleasant and distasteful.

,BRDZUN DU SMRA BA'I NI, ZHING LAS DANG GRU SPYOD PA'I LAS KYI MTHA' RGYAS PAR MI 'GYUR BA DANG MTHUN PAR MI 'GYUR ZHING PHAL CHER BSLU BA DANG 'JIGS PA DANG 'JIGS SU RUNG BA'I RGYU MANG PO DANG LDAN PA DANG ,

Because you have lied, you live in a world where, when you undertake farming or some work in cooperation with other people, in the end the work fails to prosper, and the people can't work well together, and for the most part everyone is cheating one another, and is afraid, and where there are many things to be afraid of.

PHRA MA'I NI, SA PHYOGS 'BAR 'BUR DANG LCANG LCONG DANG MTHO DMA' DANG BGROD DKA' BA DANG 'JIGS PA DANG 'JIGS SU RUNG BA'I RGYU MANG PO DANG LDAN PA DANG ,

Because you have split people up with your talk, the very ground in the place

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

you live is all uneven, covered with crags and gullies, full of highs and lows, so that you can travel only with difficulty, and where you are always afraid, and there are many things to be afraid of.

NGAG RTZUB PO'I NI, SA PHYOGS SDONG DUM DANG TSER MA DANG
RDO DANG GSEG MA DANG GYO MO MANG BA DANG RTZUB PA DANG
MDANGS MI SNUM PA DANG 'BAB CHU DANG MTSO DANG LTENG KA
MED PA DANG SKAMS DANG TSVA RGO DANG DGON DUNG DANG THA
CHAD DANG SDIG PA CAN GYI SA GZHI DANG 'JIGS PA'I RGYU MANG
PO DANG LDAN PA DANG ,

Because you have spoken harsh words, the ground where you live is covered with obstacles like the trunks of fallen trees, and thorns, and stones, and clods of dirt, and lots of sharp broken pieces of glass; it's rough, and dreary; no streams, or lakes, or springs of water; the whole earth is parched, poisoned with salt and borax, burning hot, useless, threatening; a place where there are many things to fear.

TSIG KYAL BA'I NI, 'BRAS BU'I LJON SHING LA 'BRAS BU MI 'CHAGS PA
DANG DUS MIN PAR YANG 'BRAS BU 'CHAGS PA DANG DUS SU MI
'CHAGS PA DANG MA SMIN PA SMIN PAR SNANG BA DANG RTZA BA MI
BRTAN PA DANG RING DU MI GNAS PA DANG KUN DGA' RA BA'AM
NAGS TSAL LAM RDZING BU NYAMS DGA' BA MI MANG BA DANG 'JIGS
PA'I RGYU MANG PO DANG LDAN PA DANG ,

Because you have talked meaninglessly, fruits refuse to grow on the trees, or they start to grow at the wrong times, never at the right times, and seem ripe when they're still not ripe, or their roots are frail, or they can't stay long; there are no places to take your leisure, no parks, no glades, no pools of cool water, and many things around to make you afraid.

BRNAB SEMS KYI NI, PHUN SUM TSOGS PA THAMS CAD LO RE RE DANG
DUS TSIGS DANG ZLA BA DANG ZHAG RE RER YANG NYAMS SHING 'BRI
LA 'PHEL BA NI MIN PA DANG ,

Because you have coveted what others have, then each and every good thing you ever manage to find starts to get worse, and less and less, never more, each one of them, with the passing of each of the four seasons, and in every month, and even day by day.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

GNOD SEMS KYI NI, YAMS DANG GNOD PA DANG NAD 'GO BA DANG
'KHRUG PA DANG PHA ROL GYI DMAG TSOGS LAS 'KHRUG LONG MANG
BA DANG SENG GE DANG STAG LA SOGS PA DANG SBRUL GDUG DANG
SDIG PA DANG SRIN GYI ME MANG BA DANG GNOD SBYIN GDUG PA
DANG CHOM RKUN LA SOGS PA MANG BA DANG ,

Because you have wished bad things on others, you live in a world of chaos, where diseases spread, and evil is everywhere, and plague, and conflict, and fear from the armies of other nations; where there are many lions or leopards or other dangerous animals; where there are everywhere venomous snakes or scorpions or poison biting worms; you live surrounded by harmful spirits, and thieves or muggers, and the like.

LOG LTA'I NI, SNOD KYI 'JIG RTEN NA 'BYUNG KHUNGS MCHOG DANG
GTZO BO DAG NUB PAR 'GYUR BA DANG DNGOS PO MI GTZANG BA
DANG SDUG BSNAL BA DAG MCHOG TU GTZANG BA DANG BDE BAR
SNANG BA DANG GNAS DANG SKYOB PA DANG SKYABS MED PAR
'GYUR BA'O, ,

Because you have held wrong views, then you live in a world where the single highest source of happiness is steadily disappearing from the earth; a world where people think that things that are unclean and things that are suffering are actually nice, and happiness; a world where there is no place to go, no one to help, nothing to protect you.

,RJE TZONG KHA PA MCHOG GIS BRTZOMS PA'I LAM RIM CHEN MO LAS,

[The following selections are from the Great Book on the Steps of the Path, composed by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).]

,DANG PO NI, SROG GCOD PA GANG ZHE NA, 'DI LA BSDU BAR GZHI
DANG 'DU SHES DANG BSAM PA DANG NYON MONGS DANG MTHA' STE
LNGAR GSUNGS KYANG , BAR PA GSUM BSAM PAR BSDUS TE SBYOR BA
BSNAN NAS GZHI DANG BSAM PA DANG SBYOR BA DANG MTHAR
THUG BZHI BZHIR BSDUS TE BSHAD NA 'JUG PA BDE ZHING DGONGS PA
DANG MI 'GAL LO, ,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Here is the first. One may ask, "How do you define the act of killing?" The *Abbreviation* says that five parts are involved: the object, the conception, the thinking, the bad thought, and the conclusion. These five can be shortened into four: the middle three can be included into the thinking, and we can add the stage of undertaking; this makes the presentation easier, and in no way violates the intention of the original text.

DE LA SROG GCOD KYI GZHI NI, SROG DANG LDAN PA'I SEMS CAN TE,
DE YANG GSOD PA PO RANG NYID GSOD NA SBYOR BA'I SDIG PA YOD
KYI, MTHAR THUG MED PA LA DGONGS NAS RNAL 'BYOR SPYOD PA'I SA
LAS SROG CHAGS PHA ROL PO ZHES GSUNGS SO, ,

Now the object for killing is a sentient being: anything with life. The *Levels of Practitioners* does state "another living being," but is only referring to the fact that, when the murderer is murdering himself, there is a wrong deed of undertaking, but not one of completion.

BSAM PA LA GSUM LAS, 'DU SHES NI BZHI STE, GZHI SEMS CAN LTA BU
LA SEMS CAN DU 'DU SHES PA DANG SEMS CAN MIN PAR 'DU SHES PA
DANG SEMS CAN MIN PA LA SEMS CAN MIN PAR 'DU SHES PA DANG
SEMS CAN DU 'DU SHES PA BZHI STE, 'DU SHES DANG PO DANG GSUM
PA NI MA 'KHRUL BA DANG , GNYIS PA DANG BZHI PA NI 'KHRUL BA'O, ,

The part of the thinking has three components of its own. Conception can be of four different types: to conceive of the object, say a living being, as being a living being; to conceive of a living being as something other than a living being; to conceive of something other than a living being as being other than a living being, and to conceive of this same thing as a living being. The first and third types of conception here are unmistakable; the second and fourth are mistaken.

'DI LA KUN SLONG BYE BRAG CAN DPER NA, LHAS BYIN KHO NA BSAD
SNYAM NAS SBYOR BA BRTZAMS PA NA MCHOD SBYIN DU NOR NAS
BSAD NA, DNGOS GZHI'I SDIG MED PAS DE LTA BU LA 'DU SHES MA
'KHRUL BA DGOS SHING , SBYOR BA'I DUS SU GANG BYUNG YANG GSOD
SNYAM PA KUN SLONG SPYI LA ZHUGS PA YOD NA 'DU SHES MA
'KHRUL BA MI DGOS SO, , TSUL 'DI NI LHAG MA DGU LA YANG CI RIGS
PAR SHES PAR BYA'O, ,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

This is a particular feature of the motivation. Suppose, for example, that you think to yourself, "I only want to kill John," and undertake the deed. Then you mistake Joe for John, and kill Joe. In this sort of case, there is no "actual-commission" stage; so we can see that, for this stage, the conception you have must be unmistakable. If on the other hand you undertake the deed with some general kind of motivation, if you think to yourself, "I'll kill anyone I happen to meet," then this detail of the conception having to be unmistakable need not be complete. You should understand that this point applies to the other nine as well.

NYON MONGS PA NI, DUG GSUM GANG RUNG NGO , ,

The second component of the thinking is the bad thought involved. In this case, it can be any of the three poisons.

A third component is the motivation; here, it is the wish to kill.

KUN SLONG NI, BSAD PAR 'DOD PA'O, , SBYOR BA LA SBYOR BA PO NI,
RANG GIS BYAS PA'AM GZHAN BYED DU 'JUG PA GNYIS GANG BYAS
KYANG 'DRA STE, SBYOR BA'I NGO BO NI MTON NAM, DUG GAM, RIG
SNGAGS KYI SGO NAS SBYOR BA BYAS PA LA SOGS PA GANG YANG
RUNG BA'O, ,

Here are the different aspects of the undertaking. As far as the one who undertakes the deed, it doesn't matter whether you perform it yourself, or get someone else to do it for you, it's all the same. The essence of the undertaking is when the deed is initiated, either with some kind of weapon, or poison, or spell, or whatever the case may be.

MTHAR THUG NI, SBYOR BA DE'I RKYEN GYIS PHA ROL PO DE'I TSE'AM,
DUS GZHAN GYI TSE SHI BA'O, , DE YANG MDZOD LAS, SNGA DANG
MNYAM DU SHI BA LA, , DNGOS MED LUS GZHAN SKYES PHYIR RO, ,
ZHES GSUNGS PA NI 'DIR YANG 'DRA'O,

The conclusion occurs when, due to this undertaking of the deed, the other person dies, either at the time of the undertaking, or later on. As the *Treasure House of Knowledge* says,

There is no actual stage for those who die

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Before or together, for another body's been born.

,DE LA SROG GCOD DANG TSIG RTZUB DANG GNOD SEMS NI DUG GSUM
GYIS RTZOM PAR BYED LA ZHE SDANG GIS MTHAR PHYIN PAR BYED
CING,

Three of the ten--killing, harsh words, and harmful intent--can be initiated by any of the three poisons, and are brought to a conclusion by disliking.

MA BYIN LEN DANG LOG G-YEM DANG BRNAB SEMS NI DUG GSUM GYIS
RTZOM PAR BYED LA 'DOD CHAGS KHO NAS MTHAR 'BYIN NO, ,

Three of them--stealing, sexual misconduct, and coveting--can be initiated by any of the three poisons, but are brought to a conclusion only by desire.

BRDZUN DANG PHRA MA DANG TSIG KYAL BA NI RTZOM PA DANG
MTHAR PHYIN PA GNYIS KA GSUM CHAR GYIS BYED CING,

Three more--lying, divisive speech, and meaningless speech--can be initiated and brought to a conclusion by all three.

LOG LTA NI DUG GSUM GYIS RTZOM PAR BYED LA GTI MUG KHO NAS
MTHAR THUG PAR BYED DO, ,

One of the ten--wrong views--can be initiated by any of the three poisons, but is brought to a conclusion only by dark ignorance.

DE DAG LAS SEMS PA NI LAS YIN LA LAS KYI LAM NI MIN NO, , LUS
NGAG GI BDUN NI, LAS KYANG YIN LA SEMS PA 'JUG PA'I GZHI YIN PAS
LAS KYI LAM YANG YIN NO, , BRNAB SEMS SOGS GSUM NI LAS KYI LAM
YIN GYI LAS NI MIN NO,

The movements of the mind are an action (karma) but not a path of action. The seven of body and speech are both an action and--because they are the basis in which the movement of the mind engages--are also a path of action. The three of coveting and so on are a path of action but not themselves action (karma).

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

[Selection from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path*, by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419), pages 98-114.]

,GNYIS PA SNYING PO LEN TSUL DNGOS LA GSUM, , SKYES BU CHUNG
NGU DANG THUN MONG BA'I LAM GYI RIM PA LA BLO SBYANG BA
DANG , 'BRING DANG THUN MONG BA'I LAM GYI RIM PA LA BLO
SBYANG BA DANG , SKYES BU CHEN PO'I LAM GYI RIM PA LA BLO
SBYANG BA'O,

The second part, the instruction on how to get the very essence out of life, includes three different sections: the teaching on how to train one's mind in the steps of the path that are shared with those of lesser scope; the teaching on how to train one's mind in the steps of the path that are shared with those of medium scope; and the teaching on how to train one's mind in the steps of the path for those of greater scope.

,DANG PO LA GSUM, CHUNG NGU'I BSAM PA SBYANG BA DNGOS, BSAM
PA DE SKYES PA'I TSAD, DE LA LOG PAR RTOG PA BSAL BA'O, , DANG PO
LA GNYIS, 'JIG RTEN PHYI MA DON GNYER GYI BLO BSKYED PA DANG ,
'JIG RTEN PHYI MAR BDE BA'I THABS BSTEN PA'O,

The first of these three sections has three divisions of its own: the actual teaching for training one's mind in the attitude of a person of lesser scope; how to know when you have succeeded in reaching this attitude; and clearing up some misconceptions about the attitude. The first of these divisions has two parts: learning to develop the attitude of focussing on the life hereafter; and learning to make use of the various ways of achieving happiness in these future lives.

,DANG PO LA GNYIS, 'JIG RTEN 'DIR RING DU MI GNAS PA 'CHI BA RJES
SU DRAN PA BSAM PA DANG , 'JIG RTEN PHYI MAR JI LTAR 'GYUR BA
'GRO BA GNYIS KYI BDE SDUG BSAM PA'O,

We will cover the subject of focusing on the life after death in two stages. The first is the contemplation of how to maintain an awareness of death; that is, the fact that we have not long to stay in this present world. The second is the contemplation of the relative happiness and pain of the two broad categories of

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

living beings; that is, the question of what will happen to us when we reach our future life.

,DANG PO LA BZHI, 'CHI BA DRAN PA MA BSGOMS PA'I NYES DMIGS,
BSGOM PA'I PHAN YON, 'CHI BA DRAN PA'I BLO JI LTA BU ZHIG BSKYED
PA, 'CHI BA DRAN PA BSGOM PA'I TSUL LO,

There are four steps to the contemplation of death. These are:

- 1) Considering the problems of not meditating on death.
- 2) Considering the benefits of meditating on death.
- 3) Identifying just what kind of death awareness we seek to develop.
- 4) How to meditate and develop this awareness of death.

,DANG PO NI, DE LTAR DAL BA'I RTEN LA SNYING PO LEN PA LA 'JUG PA
LA PHYIN CI LOG BZHI LAS, MI RTAG PA LA RTAG PAR 'DZIN PA'I PHYIN
CI LOG NYID DANG POR GNOD PA'I SGOR 'GYUR RO,

Here is the first of the four. Above we spoke of getting the very essence out of this life, where now you have a whole range spiritual opportunities. The one thing that could damage your ability to do so, from the very beginning, is the first of what we call the "four misconceptions." This is the misconception where you grasp to impermanent things as being permanent.

,DE LA PHRA RAGS GNYIS LAS RAGS PA'I MI RTAG PA 'CHI BA LA MI 'CHI
SNYAM PA'I RNAM PAR RTOG PA NYID GNOD PA'I SGO'O, , 'DI LA YANG
DA GZOD MTHAR 'CHI BA ZHIG 'ONG SNYAM PA NI KUN LA YOD
KYANG NYI MA RE RE BZHIN DE RING MI 'CHI, DE RING YANG MI 'CHI
SNYAM DU BLOS MI 'CHI BA'I PHYOGS 'DZIN PA NI 'CHI KHA MA TSUN
LA 'BYUNG NGO ,

There are two versions to this wrong idea. One is more subtle, and one is more gross. The one that could damage your practice is the grosser one, where you look upon your own impermanence, your own mortality, and imagine for some reason that you are *not* going to die.

Now it is true that in your life up to now you have had some awareness that eventually you would have to die. Everybody has this kind of death awareness. But at the same time you tend to be of the opinion that you won't die, because

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

with every day that passes you say to yourself, "It won't be today, today is not the day that I will die." And you keep this attitude all the way up to the moment of your death.

,DE'I GNYEN PO YID LA MA BYAS PAR DE LTA BU'I BLO DES BSGRIBS NA TSE 'DIR SDOD PA'I BLO SKYES NAS DE'I RING LA 'DI DANG 'DI DGOS SO ZHES TSE 'DI TZAM GYI BDE BA BSGRUB PA DANG SDUG BSNAL SEL BA'I THABS 'BA' ZHIG LA SEMS SEMS NAS, 'JIG RTEN PHYI MA DANG THAR PA DANG THAMS CAD MKHYEN PA LA SOGS PA'I DON CHEN PO DAG LA RNAM PAR DPYOD PA'I BLO MI SKYE BAS CHOS LA 'JUG PA'I BLO SKYER MA STER LA,

Suppose you let this kind of attitude go on, suppose you fail to apply the spiritual antidotes that would stop these sorts of thoughts. The thoughts then create a kind of spiritual blindness: you begin to get the idea that you are going to be able to stay here in this life, and then you start to obsess on this life. All you can concentrate on then is how to get what you want, and how to escape what you don't want, in this life. Your life becomes, "Today I need this, and this, and next this."

BRGYA LA THOS PA DANG BSAM PA DANG BSGOM PA SOGS LA ZHUGS KYANG TSE 'DI PA TZAM GYI CHED DU SONG NAS DGE BA CI BYAS MTHU CHUNG ZHING , DE YANG NYES SPYOD SDIG LTUNG DANG 'BREL BAR 'JUG PAS NGAN 'GRO'I RGYU DANG MA 'DRES PA DKON NO,

And then even if--by some remote chance--you do engage in spiritual activities like learning, or contemplation, or meditation, they all become something you are doing only for this life. Whatever good deeds you do this way are of very little strength. And because they are then typically connected with some bad deed, some breaking of morality or transgression of a vow, it is quite unusual to find any good activities of this type that are not interlaced with the very causes that would take you to one of the births of misery.

,GAL TE 'JIG RTEN PHYI MA LA DMIGS NAS BSGRUB TU CHUG KYANG , PHYIS NAS RIM GYIS BSGRUB BO SNYAM PA'I PHYI BSHOL GYI LE LO 'GOG MI NUS SHING GNYID RMUGS DANG BRE MO'I GTAM DANG , BZA' BTUNG LA SOGS PA'I RNAM G-YENG GIS DUS 'DA' BAS BRTZON PA CHEN POS TSUL BZHIN DU BSGRUB PA MI 'ONG NGO ,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Suppose even that you do decide to do something for your future life. Without this awareness of death you find yourself unable to stop the kind of laziness where you put your practice off, where you say to yourself, "I'll get to it later, I'll do all these things eventually, one at a time." You begin to pass the time of your life with all kinds of distractions: with sleep, or lazing around, or wasted talk, or food or drink, or the like. You won't be able to reach a point where the practice that you do has any great energy behind it.

,DE LTAR LUS SROG YUN RING DU GNAS SU RE BAS BSLUS PA NA RNYED
PA DANG BKUR STI LA SOGS PA LA CHAGS PA DRAG PO SKYE ZHING ,
DE'I GEGS BYAS PA'AM BYED DU DOGS PA LA SDANG BA DRAG PO
DANG , DE DAG GI NYES DMIGS LA RMONGS PA'I GTI MUG DANG DE
DAG GIS NGA RGYAL BA DANG PHRAG DOG LA SOGS PA'I NYON
MONGS PA DANG NYE BA'I NYON MONGS DRAG PO RNAMS CHU BO'I
RGYUN BZHIN DU 'JUG GO,

This kind of hope that you will be able to live for a long time deceives you. You start to have strong attachment to gain, to being honored by other people, and the like. You begin to feel a strong dislike for anything that prevents you, or anything that you think might prevent you, from having these things. There grows in you a dark ignorance that cannot understand the problems these thoughts then give you.

These lead to a steady torrent of mental afflictions, strong ones, and all the different varieties of them, major and minor: pride, and jealousy, and all the rest.

,DE LAS KYANG LUS DANG NGAG DANG YID KYI NYES SPYOD BCU
DANG MTSAMS MED PA DANG DE DANG NYE BA DANG DAM PA'I CHOS
SPONG BA LA SOGS PA MI DGE BA'I LAS NGAN 'GRO LA SOGS PA'I SDUG
BSNGAL DRAG PO 'DREN PAR BYED PA LA MTHU PHUL DU BYUNG BA
RNAMS NYI MA RE RE BZHIN JE RGYAS SU 'GRO LA, DE DAG GI GNYEN
PO LEGS PAR GSUNGS PA'I CHOS KYI BDUD RTZI LA RGYAB KYIS JE
PHYOGS SU SONG NAS MNGON MTHO DANG NGES LEGS KYI SROG
BCAD DE, NGAN 'GRO SDUG BSNGAL DRAG CING RTZUB LA TSA ZHING
YID DU MI 'ONG BA'I GNAS SU, 'CHI BAS NYE BAR BCOM NAS LAS NGAN
PAS 'KHRID PAR BYED PAS NA DE LAS MA RUNGS PA'I SGO GZHAN CI
ZHIG YOD,

These afflictions in turn lead you to harmful deeds done in your acts, your

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

words, and your thoughts: deeds like the ten non-virtues, and the five "immediate" deeds, and the five that are close to these, and giving up the highest Dharma, and on and on. Every single day then deeds like these, of tremendous power, capable of leading you to the sufferings of the three lower realms and the like, will tend to increase, further and further. The antidote for all these deeds is the nectar of the Dharma, spoken so true, and the further you turn from it then the more tightly you strangle your chances for the higher realms, and ultimate good. Death will rip away your life, and the wrong deeds you have done will drag you to the lower realms, to a fearful place of mighty and savage suffering, to the fires. And so I ask you, where could you find any thought more disastrous for you than this idea, that what is impermanent could be permanent?

BZHI BRGYA PA LAS KYANG , GANG LA 'JIG RTEN GSUM MNGA' BDAG,
RANG NYID 'CHI BDAG BYED PO MED, , YOD DES RNAL BZHIN GNYID
LOG NA, , DE LAS MA RUNGS GZHAN CI YOD, , CES GSUNGS PA DANG ,

On this point the *Four Hundred* concurs:

What could be more a disaster than someone
Who with no other Lord of Death to kill him
Was acting as this Lord of Three Realms
For himself, asleep as if all were well?

[The "Lord of the Three Realms" is the Lord of Death; he has total control over all living things except those who are traveling on the path of the realized, those who have seen emptiness directly. If we could reach this path we would have a chance to reach deathlessness, but instead we lazily act as if everything were all right, and end up inviting Lord Death, who otherwise would have to pass us by.]

SPYOD 'JUG LAS KYANG , THAMS CAD BOR TE CHA DGOS PAR, , BDAG
GIS DE LTAR MA SHES NAS, , MDZA' DANG MI MDZA'I DON GYI PHYIR, ,
SDIG PA RNAM PA SNA TSOGS BYAS, , ZHES GSUNGS SO,

The *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* says as well,

You must leave it all behind and go, with your karmic baggage,
But because you do not understand this,
You undertake an entire variety of wrong deeds,
Reacting to your friends, and your enemies.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

,GNYIS PA BSGOMS PA'I PHAN YON NI, 'CHI BA RJES SU DRAN PA'I BLO
RNAL MA ZHIG SKYES NA, DPER NA, DE RING SANG RANG 'CHI BAR
THAG CHOD PA NA, CHOS KYI GO BA THAN THUN YOD PA YAN CHAD
LA GNYEN DANG RDZAS LA SOGS PA DANG 'GROGS SU MED PAR
MTHONG NAS DE DAG LA SRED PA LDOG CING , GTONG BA LA SOGS
PA' I SGO NAS SNYING PO LEN 'DOD PHAL CHER LA NGANG GIS 'BYUNG
BA LTAR,

Here secondly is the contemplation of the benefits of meditating upon your death. Suppose on the other hand that you are able to develop a real awareness of your mortality. You would then be like a person who knew he or she were going to die within the next day or two.

If this person had even a feeble understanding of the Dharma, or of course anything more than that, then he or she would quickly realize that none of their loved ones, nor any of the things they owned or anything else, could go on the journey with them. All their attachment to these things would stop. The great majority of such people at this point would automatically start to feel some desire to get the essence out of the life they had left to them, and they would start to engage in acts such as charity and the like.

RNYED BKUR DANG GRAGS PA LA SOGS PA 'JIG RTEN GYI CHOS KYI
PHYIR 'BAD PA THAMS CAD SBUN PA 'PHYAR BA LTAR SNYING PO MED
PA DANG BSLU BRID KYI GNAS SU MTHONG NAS NYES SPYOD LAS
LDOG CING , SKYABS SU 'GRO BA DANG TSUL KHRIMS LA SOGS PA' I LAS
BZANG PO RNAMS RTAG TU DANG , GUS PAR BYED PA' I BRTZON 'GRUS
KYIS GSOG PAR BYED PAS LUS LA SOGS PA SNYING PO MED PA RNAMS
LA SNYING PO DAM PA BLANGS NAS GO 'PHANG DAM PAR RANG NYID
'DZEGS TE, 'GRO BA RNAMS KYANG DER 'KHRID PAS NA DE LAS DON
CHE BA CI ZHIG YOD,

You now should be the same. Think of the gain and honor, the fame and other such things you hope for from others--all these worldly hopes and dreams. Try to see that all the efforts you put into these things are empty, meaningless, like useless shells of wheat once the grain has been taken out. Try to understand how these thoughts deceive you, how they wait to snare and trap you. Stop all your bad deeds.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Exert yourself now in the opposite--in good deeds, such as going for refuge, and observing an ethical way of life, and the like. Amass these kinds of deeds constantly, and with a sense of reverence and joy. This body and the rest may be meaningless, but you can give them the highest meaning; you can use them to climb to the highest state there is, and then you can lead others there as well. And then I would ask you another question: Where could you find any more important deed you could do, than this?

DE'I PHYIR DPE DU MAS KYANG BSNGAGS TE, MYA NGAN LAS 'DAS PA
CHEN PO LAS, ZHING RMO BA THAMS CAD KYI NANG NA STON GYI
LOG MCHOG GO, , RJES THAMS CAD KYI NANG NA BA LANG GI RJES
MCHOG GO, , 'DU SHES THAMS CAD KYI NANG NA'ANG MI RTAG PA
DANG 'CHI BA'I 'DU SHES MCHOG YIN TE, 'DI DAG GIS NI KHAMS GSUM
GYI 'DOD PA DANG MA RIG PA DANG NGA RGYAL THAMS CAD SEL LO, ,
ZHES SO,

This is why the awareness of death is praised in so many places, with so many metaphors. We see for example the following, from the *Sutra of the Great Nirvana*:

Of all the crops plowed in the ground,
the crops of autumn are greatest.
of all the tracks left on the ground,
the elephant's are greatest.
Of all the thoughts a person can have,
the thoughts of impermanence
and death are the greatest ones,
For these are the thoughts that clear away
the desire, ignorance, and the pride
of all three of the realms.

,DE BZHIN DU NYON MONGS PA DANG NYES PAR SPYOD PA THAMS
CAD CIG CAR 'JOMS PA'I THO BA DANG , DGE LEGS THAMS CAD CIG
CAR BSGRUB PA LA 'JUG PA'I SGO CHEN POR GYUR PA LA SOGS PAS
KYANG BSNGAGS PA'O,

The awareness of death has been praised in other similes as well, sometimes for example compared to a great hammer, which can smash in a single stroke all your mental afflictions, and harmful deeds. It is also compared to a huge gateway, where all good and pure things can come through to you, all in a single

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

rush.

,TSOMS LAS KYANG , LUS 'DI RDZA SNOD 'DRA BAR RTOGS BYA ZHING , ,
DE BZHIN CHOS RNAMS SMIG RGYU 'DRAR SHES NAS, , BDUD KYI ME
TOG MTSON NI 'DIR GCOD PA, , 'CHI BDAG RGYAL POS BLTAR YANG
MED PAR 'GRO, , ZHES DANG ,

The *Anthology* too states,

Come to see that this body of yours
is fragile as a piece of china,
And that all other things that exist
are something similar to a mirage.
If you can, then the rain of spears
thrown by the demons, the flowers,
Are stopped short, and the Lord of Death
hungering for you dies himself.

RGA BA MTHONG ZHING NAD KYI SDUG BSNGAL DANG , , SEMS DANG
BRAL BA'I SHI BA MTHONG NAS NI, , BRTAN PA'I BTZON RA 'DRA BA'I
KHYIM SPANGS KYI, , 'JIG RTEN PHAL PAS 'DOD SPANG NUS RE SKAN, ,
ZHES GSUNGS SO,

It says as well that,

Those who have seen what it is to grow old,
who have seen the suffering of disease,
Those who have seen what it is to die,
who have seen the mind depart and leave,
They can give up the family life,
so much like a prison hard and fast;
Don't ever dream though that normal people
of the world could ever give up desire.

,MDOR NA SKYES BU'I DON BSGRUB PA'I DUS NI DAL BA'I RTEN KHYAD
PAR CAN THOB PA'I DUS 'DI KHO NA YIN LA, 'O SKOL PHAL CHER NGAN
'GROR BSDAD CING BDE 'GROR CUNG ZAD RE 'ONGS KYANG MI KHOM
PA'I GNAS SU SHAS CHE BAS DE DAG TU CHOS BSGRUB PA'I SKABS MI

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

RNYED LA, BSGRUBS PAS CHOG PA'I RTEN RE THOB PA NA YANG CHOS
TSUL BZHIN DU MI BSGRUB PA NI DA DUNG MI 'CHI SNYAM PA 'DI LA
THUG 'DUG PAS NA, BLOS MI 'CHI BA'I PHYOGS 'DZIN PA NI RGUD PA
KUN GYI SGO DANG , DE'I GNYEN PO 'CHI BA DRAN PA NI PHUN SUM
TSOGS PA THAMS CAD KYI SGO'O,

To put it briefly, the time for a person to do something of value is now, and only now--now while we possess a body and life like this, so full of spiritual leisure. You and I have spent most of our time in the births of misery, and we come up now and again to the better births; but the vast majority of the time was in the realms where we had none of the necessary opportunities, and so we had no chance at all to undertake any spiritual practice.

And the fact that in this moment here, when we *have* found the kind of life where we could do some practice, we nonetheless do nothing the way it should be done, is all in the final analysis due to our belief that we will not die, just yet. We can say then that our natural bias towards thinking that we won't die is the root of every trouble we have. The antidote for this way of thinking--that is, to stay aware of our imminent death--is then the root of anything good that could ever come to us.

,DE'I PHYIR 'DI LTA BU LA CHOS ZAB MO GZHAN BSGOM RGYU MED PA
RNAMS KYI NYAMS LEN NO SNYAM PA DANG , BSGOM BYA YIN KYANG
DANG POR CUNG ZAD TZAM BSGOM PAR BYA YI, RGYUN PA'I NYAMS
LEN DU MI 'OS SO SNYAM DU MI BZUNG BAR 'DI THOG MTHA' BAR
GSUM DU DGOS LUGS LA NGES PA SNYING THAG PA NAS BSKYED DE
BSGOM PAR BYA'O,

This being the case, you should never let yourself think, "This is one of those practices meant for people who have nothing more profound to meditate upon." And you should never let yourself think that, "It is admittedly something we should meditate upon, but only at the beginning of our practice, and only for a bit at that; it's not something that warrants a continual effort to put into practice." Rather you should try to develop a true understanding, from the depths of your heart, where you realize that this is a meditation which you need at the start, at the end, and all throughout the path. With this understanding established within you then, you must meditate upon your death.

,GSUM PA 'CHI BA DRAN PA'I BLO JI LTA BU ZHIG BSKYED PA NI, GNYEN

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

LA SOGS PA LA CHAGS PA BRTAN PA'I DBANG GIS DE DAG DANG BRAL
GYIS DOGS NAS SKRAG PA SKYE BA NI LAM LA YE MA SBYANGS PA'I
'CHI BA LA SKRAG LUGS YIN PAS 'DIR DE BSKYED PA NI MIN NO,

Here now is the third step--identifying just what kind of death awareness we seek to develop. Now there is a kind of terror that a person can feel when he or she fears that they are about to be torn away from their loved ones and such. This fear stems from a very strong attachment for those around you, and is the natural fear of a person who has never attempted any kind of practice of the path. As such, it is not the awareness of death that we are talking about having to develop here.

, 'O NA GANG YIN SNYAM NA, LAS DANG NYON MONGS PA'I DBANG GIS
LUS BLANGS PA THAMS CAD NGES PAR 'CHI BA LAS MA 'DAS PAS DE LA
SKRAG PA BSKYED KYANG RE ZHIG LA DGAG MI NUS MOD, 'ON KYANG
'JIG RTEN PHYI MA'I DON NGAN 'GRO'I RGYU 'GOG PA DANG MNGON
MTHO DANG NGES LEGS KYI RGYU MA BSGRUBS PAR 'CHI BA LA 'JIGS
PAR BYA STE,

What then is this awareness? There is not a single being who has taken on a body like ours--one created by the force of our past deeds and mental afflictions--who is exempt from the absolute certainty of death. It is true that, in the short run, trying to develop some fear about this fact might not enable you to stop it. Nonetheless you really must try to develop some fear that you might die before you have been able to achieve your goals for your future life: that you might die before you have managed to put an end to anything that might cause you to be born in one of the lower realms, or before you have achieved all those things that would lead you to the higher realms, and to ultimate good.

DE LA NI DES SKRAG PA BSAMS NA DE DAG BSGRUB TU YOD PAS 'CHI
KHAR MI SKRAG PA BYAR YOD LA, DON DE DAG MA BSGRUBS NA SPYIR
'KHOR BA LAS MI THAR BA DANG , KHYAD PAR DU NGAN 'GROR
LTUNG BAS 'JIGS NAS 'CHI BA'I TSE 'GYOD PAS GDUNG BAR 'GYUR TE,
SKYES RABS LAS, RAB TU BSGRIMS KYANG GNAS MI NUS, , GANG LA
BCOS SU MI RUNG BA, , 'JIGS SHING SDAR BAR BYAS PA YIS, , DE LA
PHAN PA CI ZHIG YOD, , DE LTAR 'JIG RTEN CHOS NYID LA BRTAGS NA, ,
MI RNAMS SDIG PA BYAS PAS 'GYOD PAR 'GYUR, , DGE BA'I LAS KYANG
LEGS PAR YONGS MA BYAS, , PHYI MA'I TSE LA SDUG BSNAL 'BYUNG
DU DOGS, , 'CHI BAR 'GYUR BA'I 'JIGS PAS RMONGS PAR 'GYUR, , GANG

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

LAS BDAG GI YID NI 'GYOD 'GYUR BA, , DE NYID BDAG GIS BYAS PAR
YONGS MI DRAN, , DKAR PO'I LAS KYANG RAB TU GOMS PAR BYAS, ,
CHOS LA GNAS NA 'CHI BAS SU ZHIG 'JIGS, , ZHES GSUNGS PA DANG ,

If you had this kind of fear, over these kinds of things, then it would help you to do something about them, and at the moment of death itself you would have no reason to be afraid. If on the other hand you find yourself unable to achieve these goals, then when death comes you will be tormented by regret, of two different kinds. In a general sense, you will realize that you were unable to free yourself from the circle of suffering life. More specifically, you will begin to feel sheer terror over the possibility of having to drop into the realms of misery. As the *Birth Stories* say,

You concentrate your every effort,
 but there's no way to stay;
What possible benefit can it be
 to feel a sense of fear
And tremble over something that
 you can now never repair?

You can tell yourself by looking at
 the nature of this world,
That those who did bad deeds are at
 this point consumed by regret;
They realize then that they didn't at all
 do good the way they should,
And begin to suspect that in the life
 beyond they will come to suffer.

The fear that you begin to feel
 as you die confuses you,
Making it difficult to recall the
 very deeds there were
That you did before, and that you feel
 such strong regret for doing.

So make it now a habit in your life
 to undertake those deeds that are pure white;
For where would you ever find a person who,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

living the Dharma, still needs fear Lord Death?

BZHI BRGYA PA LAS KYANG , BDAG NI 'CHI'O SNYAM SEMS PA, , GANG
LA NGES PAR YOD GYUR PA, , DES NI 'JIGS PA YONGS BTANG PHYIR, ,
'CHI BDAG LA YANG GA LA 'JIGS, , ZHES GSUNGS PA'I PHYIR RO,

The *Four Hundred* too has the following verse:

Anyone who's truly sure,
Who says to themselves, "I'll die,"
Leaves every kind of fear behind;
How could they then fear Death?

,DES NA LUS DANG LONGS SPYOD DANG MYUR DU 'BRAL BAR GDON MI
ZA'O SNYAM DU YANG DANG YANG DU MI RTAG PA BSAMS NA NI, DE
DAG LA MI 'BRAL BAR RE BA'I SRED PA LDOG PAS DE DAG DANG BRAL
BAS BSKYED PA'I YID KYI GDUNG BA'I DBANG GIS 'CHI BA LA SKRAG PA
MI 'BYUNG BA YIN NO,

Suppose then that you are able to contemplate your impermanence, and think to yourself, over and over again, "There is absolutely no doubt that I am quickly going to be ripped away from my body, and from all of my possessions." This would allow you to block the kind of desire that still entertains some hope that you will be able to avoid losing all these things. And then you would feel none of the fear of death that comes when your mind is tormented by the thought of this loss.

,BZHI PA 'CHI BA DRAN PA JI LTAR BSGOM PA NI, RTZA BA GSUM, RGYU
MTSAN DGU, THAG BCAD PA RNAM PA GSUM GYI SGO NAS BSGOM PAR
BYA'O, , DE LA GSUM, NGES PAR 'CHI BA BSAM PA DANG , NAM 'CHI
NGES MED BSAM PA DANG , 'CHI BA'I TSE CHOS MA GTOGS PA GANG
GIS KYANG MI PHAN PA BSAM PA'O,

Next we cover the fourth step, which is how to meditate and develop this awareness of death. You should do the meditation in three stages, going through the three principles, the nine reasons, and the three resolutions. We will proceed then through the three of (a) contemplating how it is certain that we will die; (b) contemplating how there is no certainty when we will die; and (c) contemplating how, when we do die, nothing but the Dharma can be of any help to us.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

,DANG PO LA GSUM LAS, 'CHI BDAG NGES PAR 'ONG LA DE YANG
RKYEN GYIS BZLOG TU MED PA BSAM PA NI, LUS JI 'DRA ZHIG GI SKYE
BA BLANGS KYANG 'CHI BA 'ONG STE, MI RTAG PA'I TSOMS LAS, GANG
YANG SANGS RGYAS RANG SANGS RGYAS, , SANGS RGYAS RNAMS KYI
NYAN THOS KYANG , , SKU LUS 'DI NI SPONG MDZAD NA, , SKYE BO
PHAL PA SMOS CI DGOS, , ZHES SO,

The first of these has three parts; here is the first, which is (1) contemplating how the Lord of Death must certainly arrive and, when he does, how nothing at all can stop him.

No matter what kind of body you take on yourself, death must come to you. As the *Anthology on Impermanence* states,

If total Buddhas, and self-made Buddhas as well,
And the listeners who are the followers of the Buddha,
All must eventually leave their holy forms,
Why should we need then speak of normal people?

,YUL GANG DU BSDAD KYANG 'CHI BA 'ONG BA NI, DE NYID LAS, GANG
DU GNAS NA 'CHI BAS MI TSUGS PA'I, , SA PHYOGS DE NI YOD PA MA
YIN TE, , BAR SNANG LA MED RGYA MTSO'I NANG NA MED, , RI BO
RNAMS KYI GSEB TU ZHUGS NA'ANG MIN, , ZHES SO,

We can say too that death will come to you, no matter where you go. The same text says,

It doesn't matter where you go; the place does not exist
Where death would find it difficult to intrude.
There is no such place in the sky, nor at the bottom
Of the sea, nor deep within a mountain keep.

,SNGON DANG PHYI MA'I DUS NAM DU YANG SEMS CAN RNAMS 'CHI
BAS 'JOMS PA LA KHYAD PAR MED PA NI, DE NYID LAS, BYUNG DANG
'BYUNG BAR 'GYUR BA JI SNYED PA, , KUN GYIS LUS 'DI BTANG NAS 'GRO
BA DANG , , DE KUN 'JIG PAR MKHAS PAS RTOGS GYIS TE, , CHOS LA
GNAS KYI NGES PAR SPYAD PA SPYOD, , CES SO,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

So too death makes no distinction at all for the proper order of young and old when it comes to destroy its victims. On this the same work says,

Those who are now, and those who are yet to be,
All must give up this body, and travel on.
Realize, you wise ones, that all this dies;
Live the Dharma, and do what must be done.

, 'CHI BDAG LA BROS PAS MI THAR ZHING SNGAGS LA SOGS PAS BZLOG
TU MED PA NI, RGYAL PO LA GDAMS PA LAS, DPER NA, PHYOGS BZHI
NAS RI CHEN PO SRA BA BRTAN PA SNYING PO DANG LDAN PA MA
ZHIG PA MA GAS PA 'PHAN MED PA SHIN TU MKHREGS PA GCIG TU
STUG PO BZHI GNAM LA REG CING SA BRLOG STE, RTZVA DANG SHING
DANG SHING GEL PA DANG YAL GA DANG LO MA THAMS CAD DANG
SEMS CAN SROG CHAGS 'BYUNG PO THAMS CAD PHYE MAR 'THAG
CING 'ONG BA LA NI MGYOGS PAS 'BROS PA'AM STOBS KYIS BZLOG
PA'AM NOR GYIS BZLOG PA'AM RDZAS DANG SNGAGS DANG SMAN
RNAMS KYIS BZLOG PAR SLA BA NI MA YIN NO,

Beyond this is the fact that no one can free themselves from the Lord of Death by outrunning him, nor turn him back with magic words or the like. As the scripture known as *Advice to the King* states,

Suppose for example that you were surrounded on all four sides by four great mountains, solid, firm, hard to the core, indestructible, unbreakable, indomitable, adamant and massive, stretching to the highest limits of the sky. And then suppose suddenly that they caved in on you. Every trace of vegetation--from the roots, to the stalks, to the branches, to the twigs, and out to the leaves, would be crushed to powder. And every living creature there, every sentient being, every spirit too, would be smashed to dust. And as the mountains fell in it would happen in a minute, and no one would be able to outrun them, or force them back, or buy them off. Nor but with the greatest difficulty could you use any kind of magic substance, or magic words, or any sort of elixir to stop them.

, RGYAL PO CHEN PO, DE BZHIN DU 'JIGS PA CHEN PO BZHI 'DI DAG
'ONG STE DE DAG LAS MGYOGS PAS 'BROS PA'AM STOBS KYIS BZLOG
PA'AM NOR GYIS BZLOG PA'AM RDZAS DANG SNGAGS DANG SMAN

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

GYIS BZLOG PAR SLA BA NI MA YIN NO,

Here, great King, our life is the same. When the four great terrors make their appearance, no one can outrun them, nor force them back, nor buy them off. Nor but with the greatest difficulty could you use any kind of magic substance, or magic words, or any sort of elixir to stop them.

,BZHI GANG ZHE NA RGA BA DANG NA BA DANG 'CHI BA DANG RGUD PA'O, , RGYAL PO CHEN PO, RGA BA NI DAR LA BAB PA 'JOMS SHING 'ONG , NA BA NI NAD MED PA 'JOMS SHING 'ONG , RGUD PA NI PHUN SUM TSOGS PA THAMS CAD 'JOMS SHING 'ONG , 'CHI BA NI SROG 'JOMS SHING 'ONG STE, DE DAG LAS NI MGYOGS PAS 'BROS PA'AM STOBS KYIS BZLOG PA'AM NOR GYIS BZLOG PA'AM RDZAS DANG SNGAGS DANG SMAN RNAMS KYIS ZHI BAR SLA BA NI MA YIN NO, , ZHES SO,

And what are these four terrors? They are aging, and sickness, and death, and trouble. Great King, I say to you: aging is the fact that our vitality is inevitably obliterated; sickness is the fact that our health is inevitably obliterated; trouble is the fact that any good thing that ever comes to us is inevitably obliterated; and death is the fact that our very life is inevitably obliterated. All four of these come to us, and we cannot outrun them, nor force them back, nor buy them off. Nor but with the greatest difficulty could you use any kind of magic substance, or magic words, or any sort of elixir to stop them.

,KA MA BA'I ZHAL NAS, DA LTA 'CHI BAS 'JIGS PA ZHIG DGOS, 'CHI KHAR MI MTSER BA ZHIG DGOS PA LA 'O SKOL DE LAS LDOG NAS DA LTA MI 'JIGS, 'CHI KHAR BRANG LA SEN MO 'DEBS GSUNGS NGO ,

Kamawa too once said,

A person is supposed to be frightened of death now, and then unperturbed when it actually comes. You and me though act the opposite: we feel no concern for it now, and then when it actually comes we will tear at our chest in agony.

,TSE LA SNON PA MED CING 'BRID BYED BAR MA CHAD DU YOD PA

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

BSAM PA NI, MNGAL DU 'JUG PA LAS, DA LTA LEGS PAR BDE BAR
YONGS SU BSRUNGS NA DE RING NA LO BRGYA'AM CUNG ZAD CIG
LHAG PAR 'TSO'O, , ZHES GSUNGS PA LTAR RING MTHA' DE TZAM ZHIG
YIN NO,

The second reason here is (2) the contemplation of how it is impossible to add any time onto your life, and how it continually leaks away, without a pause. The scripture entitled *Entering the Womb* describes the longest you could live as follows:

Nowadays the longest you can live, supposing you are able to take care of yourself in the very best way possible, is a hundred years, or a touch more.

,DE THUB TU CHUG KYANG DE'I BAR GYI TSE 'DZAD PA SHIN TU MYUR
TE LO NI ZLA BA SONG BAS 'DZAD CING , ZLA BA'ANG ZHAG SONG BAS
'DZAD LA ZHAG KYANG NYIN MO DANG MTSAN MO SONG BAS 'DZAD
DO, , DE DAG KYANG SNGA DRO LA SOGS PA SONG BAS 'DZAD PAS NA
TSE'I SPYI TSAD NI NYUNG LA,

Even if you could live for a hundred years, the time would pass very quickly. This is because years pass in months, and months in their turn pass in days, and days pass in daytimes and nighttimes. These too pass in the shortest periods, of mornings and evenings and the like. So a human lifespan in general is something which is very short.

DE LA'ANG SNGAR DU MA ZHIG ZAD SNANG ZHING TSE LHAG LA
YANG SNON PA SKAD CIG KYANG MED PAR 'BRID BYED NYIN MTSAN
KUN TU BAR MA CHAD PAR YOD PA'I PHYIR TE, SPYOD 'JUG LAS, NYIN
MTSAN SDOD PA YOD MED PAR, , TSE 'DI RTAG TU GOD 'GYUR ZHING , ,
SNON PA'ANG GUD NAS 'ONG MED NA, , BDAG LTA 'CHI BAR CIS MI
'GYUR, , ZHES GSUNGS PA'I PHYIR RO,

You and I can see for ourselves, moreover, that we've already used up a good number of these days. As for the days we have left, we know we are helpless to add a single moment to them. They leak away, twenty-four hours a day, without the slightest pause. On this the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Life* says,

Our lifetime constantly leaks away,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Day and night, without a moment's pause.
If your life is leaking away, and never being replenished,
Then how can you imagine, that you will never die?

,DE YANG DPE DU MA'I SGO NAS BSAM STE 'DI LTAR THAGS 'THAG PA
NA LAN RE LA SPUN NYAG MA RE LAS MI 'GRO YANG MYUR DU BTAGS
ZIN NAS 'ONG BA DANG , LUG LA SOGS PA'I GSAD BYA RNAMS GSOD
PA'I PHYIR 'KHRID PA NA, GOM PA RE RE SPOS PAS 'CHI BA LA JE NYER
'GRO BA DANG , CHU KLUNG DRAG PO'I RGYUN 'GRO BA'AM RI GZAR
GYI KHA NAS CHU 'BAB PA BZHIN DU TSE MYUR DU ZAD NAS 'GRO BA
DANG ,

There are many examples you can use during your contemplation of these points. Think of weaving a carpet: you are building it up with rows of yarn, and each row is nothing more than a few threads of wool. But if you work steadily, it all adds up and soon you've finished an entire carpet. Think too of a flock of sheep. When they are led to the slaughter house, they go forth with only one very short step at a time. But every single step brings them inexorably nearer to their death.

Think too of the rapids of a great river, or of a waterfall as it leaps from the top of a high cliff. The moments of your life are rushing away, just the same.

PHYUGS RDZIS DBYUG PA BZUNG NAS PHYUGS RNAMS RANG DBANG
MED PAR RANG GI GNAS SU SKYEL BA LTAR, NA BA DANG RGA BAS
RANG DBANG MED PAR 'CHI BDAG GI DRUNG DU 'KHRID PA'I TSUL
RNAMS SGO DU MA NAS BSGOM PAR BYA STE, TSOMS LAS, DPER NA
THAGS NI BRKYANGS PA LA, , SPUN NI GANG DANG GANG BCUG PA'I, ,
SPUN GYIS GTING LA GTUGS PA LTAR, , MI RNAMS SROG KYANG DE
BZHIN NO, , DPER NA NGES PAR BSAD PA DAG, GOM PA GANG DANG
GANG BOR BAS, , BSAD PA'I DRUNG DU BSNYEN PA LTAR, , MI RNAMS
SROG KYANG DE BZHIN NO, , CHU KLUNG DRAG TU 'BAB PA'I RGYUN, ,
LDOG PA MED PA JI LTA BAR, , DE BZHIN MI YI TSE 'GRO BA, , SLAR NI
LDOG PAR 'GYUR BA MED, , DKA' BA NYID DANG THUNG BA DANG, , DE
YANG SDUG BSNAL LDAN PA DAG, MYUR BA KHO NAR 'JIG 'GYUR TE, ,
CHU LA DBYU GUS BRIS PA BZHIN, , DPER NA PHYUGS RDZI DBYUG
THOGS KYIS, , PHYUGS RNAMS GNAS SU PHYIN BYED LTAR, , DE BZHIN
NA DANG RGA BA YIS, , MI RNAMS 'CHI BDAG DRUNG DU SKYEL, , ZHES
GSUNGS PA LTAR RO,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

A cowherd takes a club up in his hand and drives the cattle, totally helpless, to their destination. Just so do sickness and the natural aging of our bodies drive us, totally helpless, into the presence of the Lord of Death. You must use a whole variety of such examples in your meditation upon death; as the *Anthology* again says,

When for example you start to weave a carpet,
You build it up, a string of wool at a time—
Eventually then you weave it to the end.
Human lives are just the same.

Those condemned to death are another example,
Passing along with a single step at a time,
Drawing ever closer to the slaughter.
Human lives are just the same.

The rapids of a mighty river
Rush unstoppable to their end;
The passing of a human life
Is just as irreversible.

Our lives are simple hardship, short,
And something full of suffering;
In simple speed we are all destroyed,
Letters written with a stick on water.

A cowherd for example grasps a staff,
Then drives the cattle to their destination.
Just so sickness and the ravages of age
Transport us to the presence of Lord Death.

,JO BO CHEN POS KYANG CHU 'GRAM DU BYON NAS MI RTAG PA
BSGOM PA LA CHU PHRI LI LI 'GRO BA 'DI GA BDE GSUNG NAS BSGOM
SKAD, RGYA CHER ROL PA LAS KYANG , SRID GSUM MI RTAG STON KA'I
SPRIN DANG 'DRA, , 'GRO BA'I SKYE 'CHI GAR LA BLTA DANG MTSUNGS,
, 'GRO BA'I TSE 'GRO NAM MKHA'I GLOG 'DRA STE, , RI GZAR 'BAB CHU
LTA BUR MYUR MGYOGS 'GRO, , ZHES DPE DU MA'I SGO NAS GSUNGS
SO,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

They say as well that the great Lord Atisha would go to the edge of a stream and meditate there on the death; he would comment that "Sitting here and watching a trickle of water pass by is a wonderful way to meditate on life's impermanence." The *Sutra of the Cosmic Play* uses a lot of similes as well:

The three realms are impermanent,
like a cloud in the autumn sky;
Watching as people are born and die
is the same as theater.
The passing of a person's life
is a single flash of lightning;
We rush on our way to the end with speed,
like a waterfall off a cliff.

,DES NA NANG DU CUNG ZAD BSAMS PA'I 'PHRIG TSUD PA ZHIG LA
PHYI' DNGOS PO THAMS CAD KYIS MI RTAG PA MI STON PA MED
GSUNG BA LTAR YIN PAS DU MA LA SBYAR NAS BSAM, YANG YANG
BSAMS NA NGES PA SKYE, CUNG ZAD TZAM RE LA MA BYUNG BYAS PAS
MI PHAN TE, KA MA BA'I ZHAL NAS, BSAMS PAS MA BYUNG ZER TE
KHYED KYIS NAM BSAMS NYIN MO NI YENG YENG BYED, MTSAN MO NI
GNYID LOG GIN 'DUG NA BRDZUN MA ZER GSUNG BA LTAR RO,

It has been said that, "For a person who has the least bit of ability to reflect and draw some inferences on the inside, there is nothing outside of them that doesn't speak of impermanence." As such, you should try to find in your life a whole variety of examples for the fact of impermanence. Use these examples for your contemplation--and when you have contemplated thus on a regular basis, you will gain a true recognition of your impermanence. Just thinking these things over once or twice is not enough to reach this recognition. As Kamawa once said,

Here's a question for all you people who say you tried to do this contemplation but didn't get any result from it. Just when was it that you were contemplating? All day long you were distracted by other things. At night all you did was sleep. Perhaps you should stop lying to yourself.

,TSE'I MTHAR 'CHI BDAG GIS BCOM NAS 'JIG RTEN PHA ROL TU 'GRO BAR
MA ZAD DE'I BAR RNAMS SU YANG 'GRO 'CHAG NYAL GSUM GANG

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

BYED KYANG TSE BRI NAS MI 'GRO BA'I SKABS YE MED PAS, MNGAL DU
ZHUGS PA NAS 'GO BZUNG STE SKAD CIG TZAM YANG MI SDOD PAR 'JIG
RTEN PHA ROL TU KHA BLTAS NAS 'GRO BA YIN NO, , DES NA BAR GYI
GSON PA'ANG NA BA DANG RGA BA'I PHO NYA BAS KHRID NAS 'CHI
BA'I PHYIR DU 'GRO BA KHO NAR ZAD PAS GSON PA'I SKABS LA 'JIG
RTEN PHYI MAR MI 'GRO BA'I SDOD PAR BZUNG NAS DGA' BAR MI BYA
STE, DPER NA, BRAG MTHON PO'I RTZE MO NAS LHUNG BA'I TSE, SA LA
MA LHUNG BA'I BAR SNANG LA 'GRO BA'I SKABS DE LA DGA' BAR MI 'OS
PA BZHIN NO,

At the end of our life, the Lord of Death comes and destroys us, and we travel on to our next life. But there is something else too that happens all during the interim, during every hour of our life here. There is not a single moment at all when our lifetime is not slipping away, when it is not getting shorter and shorter, even as we go somewhere, or stay somewhere, waking or sleeping. So in a sense we are always on our way to our next life, we are travelling there now, and we have been on the move every second from the day we first entered our mother's womb.

Therefore even in these days, while we still live, we are living only to die: those emissaries of death, the ones called Sickness and Aging, are dragging us towards him. Don't take any comfort then in the fact that you haven't died yet, don't get the idea that you are staying anywhere, and that you haven't yet started off on your journey to the next life. You are like a man who just fell off the edge of a great rock crag; you would be foolish to take some comfort from the fact that you are still in mid-air, and haven't hit ground yet.

,DE YANG BZHI BRGYA PA'I 'GREL PAR DRANGS PA LAS, MI YI DPA' BO
THOG MA'I MTSAN MOR NI, , GANG NA 'JIG RTEN MNGAL NA GNAS
GYUR PA, , DE NAS BRTZAMS NAS DE NI NYIN RE BZHIN, , 'GROS BSHOL
MED PAR 'CHI BDAG DRUNG DU 'GRO, , ZHES DANG ,

The following lines too are quoted in the commentary on *The Four Hundred*:

This warrior amongst men, from the very first night,
From the moment of entering the womb in this world
Walks with each passing day, with ne'er a delay,
Into the presence of the Lord of Death.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

PHYIN CI LOG BZHI 'GOG PA'I GTAM LAS KYANG , RI BO MTHON PO'I
RTZE MO'I STENG NAS SA LA LHUNG BAR GYUR PA YIS, , ZHIG PAR
GYUR TSE CI 'DI BAR SNANG LA NI BDE BA MYONG 'GYUR RAM, , SKYES
NAS BRTZAMS TE 'CHI BA NYID PHYIR RTAG TU RAB TU BRGYUG PA NA,
, SEMS CAN RNAMS NI BAR SKABS GANG DU BDE BA JI LTAR 'THOB PAR
'GYUR, , ZHES GSUNGS SO, , DE DAG GIS NI MYUR DU 'CHI BAR NGES PA
BSTAN TO,

The *Words on Stopping the Four Misconceptions* also speak to this point:

Suppose you had fallen from the peak
of some high mountain top,
And were just about to die--would you then
in the free-fall feel content?
From the moment of their birth they race
to one goal only, death;
How before they reach there then
could any living being relax?

All of the above is meant to show how it is certain that we will die quickly.

,GSON PA'I TSE LA YANG CHOS BYA BA'I LONG MED PAR NGES PAR 'CHI
BA BSAM PA NI, SNGAR BSHAD PA'I RING MTHA' DE TZAM THUB TU
CHUG KYANG LONG YOD BYAR MI RUNG STE, DON MED DU TSE MANG
PO ZHIG NI SNGAR 'DAS 'DUG PA DANG LHAG MA LA'ANG GNYID KYIS
PHYED 'DA' ZHING , GZHAN YANG RNAM PAR G-YENG BA GZHAN GYIS
KYANG DU MA ZHIG DON MED DU 'DA' BA DANG , LANG TSO YOL NAS
RGAS PA'I GNAS SKABS SU SLEB NAS NI LUS DANG SEMS KYI STOBS
NYAMS PAS CHOS BYED PAR 'DOD KYANG BSGRUB PA'I MTHU MED PAS
CHOS BYED PA'I SKABS NI CUNG ZAD LAS MED DE, MNGAL DU 'JUG PA
LAS, DE LAS KYANG PHYED NI GNYID KYIS KHEBS SO, , LO BCU NI BYIS
PA'O, , LO NYI SHU NI RGAS PA STE, MYA NGAN DANG SMRE SNGAGS
'DON PA DANG SDUG BSNAGAL BA DANG YID MI BDE BA DANG 'KHRUGS
PA RNAMS KYIS KYANG BCAD, LUS LAS BYUNG BA'I NAD RNAM PA DU
MA BRGYA PHRAG DU MAS KYANG BCAD DO, , ZHES PA DANG ,

Next is contemplating (3) how certain it is that you will die without having had any time to practice the Dharma, even while you were alive. Suppose you were able to live to the end of one of those longest lives that we described above. Even

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

so it would be wrong to think that you would have any free time all that time. So far in your life you have squandered a great deal of time meaninglessly; as for what remains, you will pass half of it in sleeping.

The other half you will also spend meaninglessly, your mind filled with a great many other distractions. You will while away your days of good health and then arrive at old age, your body and mind worn out, and lacking any energy to do any Dharma, even if you wanted to. The point is that the window of opportunity during which we can undertake our spiritual practice is nothing more than a very brief period. As *Entering the Womb* relates,

You spend half of it wrapped in sleep. Ten years is wasted by childhood, and another twenty in old age. From what's left you have to subtract the time you spend in grief, and the time you spend crying in anguish, and the time you spend in physical pain, and the time you spend in deep unhappiness, and the time you spend in strife. Subtract too the time that you spend going through all those thousands of different diseases which the body is subject to.

PHYIN CI LOG BZHI 'GOG PA'I GTAM LAS KYANG , 'DI NI MI RNAMS TSE
NI MCHOG TU RING YANG LO BRGYA KHO NAR ZAD, , DE LAS KYANG
NI DANG PO BYIS PA THA MA RGAS PAS DON MED BYED, , GNYID DANG
NAD SOGS DAG GIS DE DUS MED PAR KUN NAS RE BA 'JOMS, , BDE BAR
GNAS PA'I MI NANG 'GRO BA'I TSE NI LHAG MA JI TZAM YOD, , CES
GSUNGS SO, , MCHAD KA BA'I ZHAL NAS KYANG LO DRUG CU LA LTO
RGYAB DANG GNYID DANG NA TSAS BCAD PA'I BSHOL NA CHOS SU
'GRO BA LO LNGA YANG MED GSUNG NGO ,

The *Words on Stopping the Four Misconceptions* concur:

Suppose you live to a human's longest life;
it can never be more than a hundred years.
Of these you spend the beginning, your youth,
and the end, old age, in a meaningless way.
In the days that are left, all your hopes and plans
are smashed by sleep, and disease, and the rest;
Tell me then how much time is left over, for those
who live as humans, to feel any kind of contentment?

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Chekawa too has said,

I have been alive for sixty years; and if you take away the time that I spent feeding myself, and sleeping, and being sick, there were not even five years left that I had for spiritual practice.

,DE LTAR NA TSE 'DI'I PHUN TSOGS THAMS CAD NI RMI LAM THUN GCIG NA BDE BA SPYAD BSAD NAS DRAN PA LTAR 'CHI BA'I DUS SU DRAN PA'I YUL TZAM DU 'GYUR LA, 'CHI BA'I DGRA NI DGAG TU MED PAR NGES PAR 'ONG NA CI'I PHYIR TSE 'DI'I BSLU BRID LA DGA' BAR BYA SNYAM DU BSAMS TE CHOS BYA DGOS PA LA THAG BCAD CING ZHE DAM MANG DU BYA STE, SKYES RABS LAS, KYE MA'O 'JIG RTEN NYON MONGS DAG, GNAS PA MI BRTAN DGA' MI 'GYUR, , KU MU TA YI DPAL 'DI YANG , , DRAN PAR BYA BA NYID DU 'GYUR, , 'GRO BA 'DI LTA BUR NI 'KHOD PA LA, , SKYE BO 'JIGS PA MED PA NGO MTSAR KYE, , LAM RNAMS THAMS CAD 'CHI BDAG NYID KYIS BKAG, DOGS PA MED PAR RAB TU DGA' ZHING SPYOD, , NA DANG RGA DANG 'CHI BA'I GNOD BYED DGRA, , MTHU CHEN DGAG TU MI NUS YOD BZHIN LA, , 'JIG RTEN PHA ROL NYAM NGAR NGES 'GRO NA, , SEMS SHES SU ZHIG 'DI LA DGA' BAR SEMS, , ZHES DANG ,

And so all the good things of this life are like the happiness within one night's dream: you wake, and then it's nothing more than a memory. The time comes to die, and everything good you ever had lives only in a dim remembrance.

This great enemy, death, will surely come; nothing can stop him. You should contemplate this fact--try to wonder, "Why do I take such pleasure in the lie of this life?" Make up your mind that you absolutely must now practice some Dharma; swear it to yourself, continually. Remember the *Birth Stories*, where it says:

Alas, you worldly ones so full of affliction of the mind;
Why do you take such pleasure in a land of shifting sands?
The shining glory of the kumuda bloom, opening to the moon,
Soon enough turns nothing more than a simple memory.

It's something of a pure amazement too that all of us
Thrust into a life like this are not consumed by total fear;

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Damn the Lord of Death, who stands and blocks all pathways out,
While we oblivious feel content, and have an enjoyable day.

We all share enemies, dreadfully powerful, ones we cannot stop:
Their names are sickness, age, and death; they attack us even now.
If it's certain that we are headed for agony in the world beyond,
How could anyone with a mind be content in the one here now?

K'A NI KA'I SPRINGS YIG LAS KYANG , 'CHI BDAG BRTZE BA MED PA
CAN, , SKYES RTZAL DON MED GSOD 'GYUR BA, , GSOD PA MNGON DU
'ONG BZHIN DU, , MKHAS PA SU ZHIG BAG RKYONG SPYOD, , DE'I SLAD
DPA' CHEN BZOD MED DES, , MDA' NI MI BZAD 'CHOR MED PA, , DE NI JI
SRID MA 'PHANGS PA, , DE SRID RANG GI DON LA 'BOD, , CES GSUNGS
PA LTAR BSAM MO,

Go now and contemplate these lines, from the *Epistle of Kanika*:

The Lord of Death, the heartless one,
Lays waste to the efforts of a lifetime;
With such a death on its way to him,
What man of wisdom would sit and wait?

This merciless warrior stands and aims
His detestable merciless arrow at you;
In the time before he lets it fly then
Try to make something of your life.

,GNYIS PA NAM 'CHI NGES MED BSAM PA NI, DE RING PHAN CHAD
BRGYA TSUN CHAD LA 'CHI BA 'ONG BAR NGES SHING , DE'I BAR GYI
ZHAG GANG LA 'ONG MA NGES PAS DE RING LTA BU LA 'CHI MI 'CHI
GANG DU'ANG THAG MI CHOD MOD, 'ON KYANG BLOS 'CHI BA'I
PHYOGS BZUNG NAS DE RING 'CHI SNYAM PA'I BLO BSKYED DGOS TE,
DE RING MI 'CHI SNYAM PA DANG PHAL CHER MI 'CHI SNYAM PA BLOS
MI 'CHI BA'I PHYOGS BZUNG NA TSE 'DIR SDOD PA'I GRABS BYED BYED
NAS 'JIG RTEN PHYI MA'I GRABS BYED PA MI 'ONG BAS, DE'I BAR DU 'CHI
BDAG GIS BZUNG NAS MYA NGAN DANG BCAS BZHIN DU 'CHI DGOS
PA'I PHYIR RO,

Here next is the second of the three principles: contemplating how there is no

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

certainty when we will die. It is an absolute certainty that death will come to us at some point between today and a hundred years from now. It is not certain though which day between these two he will choose. As such, we would have to admit that it's impossible to come to a definite conclusion whether or not we will die, for example, today itself.

, if you are going to try to think more on the mortal side, then you will have to develop the attitude that you will die today. If you tend to think more on the side that denies your mortality--that is, if you tend to think that you won't die today, or that you probably won't die today--then you will constantly be acting on the assumption that you will continue to be here, rather than doing something to help your future life. Right in the middle of everything then the Lord of Death will come to take you, and you will have to die in anguish.

,NYI MA RE RE BZHIN 'CHI BA'I GRABS BYAS NA NI 'JIG RTEN PHA ROL
GYI DON MANG PO 'GRUB PAS MA SHI NA YANG DE BYAS PA LEGS LA,
SHI NA NI KHYAD PAR DU'ANG DE DGOS PA YIN NO, , DPER NA, RANG
LA GNOD PA DRAG PO BYED PA'I DGRA CHEN PO ZHIG DUS 'DI NAS 'DI'I
BAR LA 'ONG BAR NI THAG CHOD LA, ZHAG GANG LA 'ONG MI SHES
NA ZHAG RE RE NAS DE'I ZON BYA DGOS PA DANG 'DRA'O,

If you spend every day getting ready to die, you will find yourself able to achieve many goals that relate to your future lives. This is an excellent thing to do regardless of whether you actually die that day or not. And it is an absolute necessity if you do happen to die that very day.

This truth can be illustrated with the following example. Suppose you have a sworn enemy, a very powerful one, and that he is planning to make some vicious attack on you. Suppose too that the general timeframe for this attack has been decided: you know that he is going to come for you sometime between this date and that date. You're not sure exactly which day he's going to appear, but you would certainly have to be on your guard every single day. The case with our death is exactly the same.

,ZHAG RE RE NAS DE RING 'CHI SNYAM PA'AM THA NA DE RING PHAL
CHER 'CHI SNYAM PA BYUNG NA GANG DU 'GRO BA'I 'JIG RTEN PHYI
MA'I DON BYED CING 'JIG RTEN 'DI'I SDOD GRABS MI BYED LA, BSAM PA
DE MA BYUNG NA 'JIG RTEN 'DIR SDOD PAR MTHONG NAS DE'I GRABS
BYED KYI, 'JIG RTEN PHYI MA'I DON MI BYED DE, DPER NA, GNAS GCIG

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

TU YUN RING DU BSDAD SNYAM NA DE'I SDOD GRABS BYED PA DANG ,
DER MI SDOD PAR GZHAN DU 'GRO SNYAM NA GANG DU 'GRO BA'I
GRABS BYED PA BZHIN NO, , DES NA NYI MA RE RE NAS 'CHI SNYAM
PA'I BLO BSKYED DGOS SO,

Suppose you are able to develop this attitude where you believe that you are going to die today, or at least that it is very likely that you will die today. The result is that you will start getting things ready for what is surely going to come--that is, for your next life--and you will stop concentrating on arranging things in your current life.

If you are unable to develop this attitude, then you will continue to believe somehow that you are going to be staying here in the present life, and you will continue to concentrate on organizing things for this life. You will continue too to ignore what's needed for your future life.

If for example you believe that you are going to be living in a certain house for a long time to come, you concentrate your time on making the house a nice place to live. If on the other hand you believe that you are moving to another house, if you believe that you will not be staying in the house where you are, then you naturally begin to concentrate on getting everything ready for the place you're going to go. Again, our case is just the same.

This proves that you must develop the attitude that you are going to die today, every day.

, 'DI LA GSUM LAS, 'DZAM BU GLING PA'I TSE LA NGES PA MED PA BSAM
PA NI, SPYIR SGRA MI SNYAN PA'I TSE NI NGES KYI, GZHAN RNAMS
RANG RANG GI TSE TSAD THUB PA'I NGES PA MED NA'ANG PHAL CHER
NGES PA MANG LA, 'DZAM BU GLING PA'I TSE NI SHIN TU MA NGES PA
YIN TE, DANG PO NI TSE LO DPAG TU MED PA'ANG BYUNG LA, DA
GDOD LO BCU LON PA LA RING MTHA' BYED DGOS SHING DA LTA
YANG RGAN GZHON BAR MA GANG LA 'CHI MA NGES PAR SNANG BA'I
PHYIR RO,

There are three reasons to prove this second principle, that there is absolutely no certainty when you are going to die. The first is the contemplation that (4) here on the continent of Dzambu, lifetimes are anything but fixed. Looking at things in a broad way, we can say that the length of a life on the continent of

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Unpleasant Sound is something which is fixed. And although on the other continents the span of life is not fixed, there are many cases where a certain length of life is normally the case.

Here on the continent of Dzambu though a person's life is anything but fixed. There are times at the beginning of the world when people can live up to an "inestimable" number of years. Eventually though there comes a time when the the longest life we can point to is only ten years. Even nowadays we can see with our own eyes how indefinite lifetimes can be, as death comes for the old, and the young, and those inbetween, at random.

,DE LTAR YANG MDZOD LAS, 'DI NA MA NGES THA MAR NI, , LO BCU
DANG PO DPAG TU MED, , CES DANG , TSOMS LAS, SNGA DRO SKYE BO
MANG MTHONG BA, , PHYI DRO KHA CIG MTHONG MI 'GYUR, , PHYI
DRO SKYE BO MANG MTHONG BA, , SNGA DRO KHA CIG MTHONG MI
'GYUR, , ZHES DANG , SKYES PA BUD MED MANG PO DANG , , DAR LA
BAB PA'ANG 'CHI 'GYUR NA, , DE LA MI 'DI GZHON ZHES TE, , GSON PA'I
GDENG DROD CI ZHIG YOD, , KHA CIG MNGAL DU 'CHI BAR 'GYUR, , DE
BZHIN KHA CIG BTZAS PA'I SAR, , DE BZHIN KHA CIG GOG TZAM NA, ,
DE BZHIN KHA CIG YONGS RGYUG NA, , LA LA RGAN DANG LA LA
GZHON, , LA LA DAR LA BAB PA'I MI, , RIM GYIS RAB TU 'GRO 'GYUR TE, ,
'BRAS BU SMIN PA LTUNG BA BZHIN, , ZHES GSUNGS TE, BLA MA'AM
GROGS LA SOGS PA TSE'I MTHAR MA PHYIN PAR GLO BUR DU PHYI
DANG NANG GI 'CHI RKYEN GYIS BSAM PA MA RDZOGS PAR SHI BA
MTHONG NGAM THOS PA RNAMS YID LA BYAS LA, BDAG KYANG NGES
PAR DE LTA BU'I CHOS CAN NO SNYAM DU YANG DANG YANG DU
BSAMS LA 'CHI BA'I BLO CI SKYE BYA'O,

As the *Treasure House* says,

Here indefinite: at the very end,
Ten years; at the beginning "inestimable."

The *Anthology* too states,

In the morning a lot of people were standing here;
By evening some of them were missing.
In the evening a lot of people were standing here;
By morning some of them were missing.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

So too it says,

We see men die, we see women die,
We see those in the bloom of health die;
So how on earth could you point to someone
And say, "He's young, he'll certainly live."

Some people die still in the womb,
Some people die in the moment of birth,
Some people die standing still,
Some people die on the run.

Some are old, some are young,
Some are strong ones in between,
They walk and then drop, in a steady stream,
Like ripe fruit falling from a tree.

Think of great lamas you've known, or friends, or anyone--the people that you've seen yourself, or heard about from others--who died before their time. Something on the outside, or something on the inside of them, came and killed them suddenly, before they were able to do all the things they were hoping to do.

You must think to yourself, "I'm in exactly the same situation now that they were in when they died..." Try to think this truth over again and again; try your best to reach this realization of your death.

, 'CHI RKYEN SHIN TU MANG ZHING GSON RKYEN NYUNG BA BSAM PA
NI, SROG 'DI LA SEMS YOD PA'I GNOD PA DANG SEMS MED PA'I GNOD
PA MANG STE, 'DI LTAR MI DANG MI MA YIN PA GDON GYI RIGS SU
GYUR PA RNAMS KYIS RNAM PA DU MAR 'TSE BA DANG DUD 'GRO'I
RIGS LUS DANG SROG LA GNOD PA BYED PA DU MA YOD PA DE DAG
GIS JI LTAR 'TSE BA'I TSUL DANG , DE BZHIN DU NANG GI NAD RNAMS
DANG PHYI ROL GYI 'BYUNG BA RNAMS KYI GNOD PA 'BAB PA'I TSUL
RNAMS KYANG ZHIB TU BSAM MO,

Next is the contemplation that (5) the things that can kill you are very, very many; whereas the things that can keep you alive are very few. There are many things that threaten the kind of life we live: threats that are living beings, and

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

threats that are inanimate objects. Humans and inhumans, beings of the spirit realm, do harm to us in many different ways. Beings of the animal realm threaten our body and life in a variety of ways as well.

You have to try to contemplate thoroughly all the ways in which these living things can hurt you; and how too that inner things like sickness, and outer things made of the various physical elements, attack you constantly.

,GZHAN YANG RANG GI LUS 'BYUNG BA BZHI LAS GRUB DGOS LA, DE
DAG KYANG PHAN TSUN GCIG LA GCIG GNOD PA BYED PAS 'BYUNG
BA'I KHAM S RNAMS CHA MA SNYOMS PAR 'PHEL 'GRIB TU GYUR PA NA
NAD BSKYED DE SROG 'PHROG PAS GNOD PA DE DAG NI RANG DANG
LHAN SKYES SU YOD PAS LUS SROG LA YID BRTAN DU MED DO,

Moreover, your body consists by necessity of the four elements. Their nature is to be in conflict with each other, which causes the energies of the four to fall out of balance, some asserting themselves too strongly, and some becoming too weak. This situation triggers then illness within the body, and this eventually rips out your life. And so in a way you are under attack by the components of your own body. Since these elements are a very part of you, life is by nature a very fragile thing.

,DE LTAR YANG 'DAS CHEN LAS, 'CHI BA'I 'DU SHES NI SROG 'DI RTAG TU
DGRA SDANG BA DU MAS BSKOR TE SKAD CIG RE RER NYAMS PAR BYED
KYI 'PHEL PAR BYED PA NI GANG YANG MED DO, , ZHES DANG ,

The *Sutra of the Great Nirvana* says as well,

And then there is the conception of death: see your life as standing there, surrounded all the time by a mass of hate-filled enemies, life leaking away with every moment, and no hope at all of ever filling back what was lost.

RIN CHEN 'PHRENG BA LAS KYANG , 'CHI BDAG RKYEN GYI NANG
GNAS PA, , RLUNG DMAR NANG 'DUG MAR ME BZHIN, , ZHES DANG ,
BSHES SPRINGS LAS KYANG , TSE NI GNOD MANG RLUNG GIS BTAB PA
YI, , CHU YI CHU BUR BAS KYANG MI RTAG NA, , DBUGS RNGUB DBUGS
'BYUNG GNYID KYIS LOG PA LAS, , SAD KHOM GANG LAGS DE NI NGO
MTSAR CHE, , ZHES DANG ,

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

The *String of Jewels* also states,

The tools of Lord Death are the very world around us;
Our lives are candles standing in a tempest.

The *Letter to a Friend* mentions,

Our lives are filled with danger, and we are more fragile
Than a bubble of water swept along in the wind.
The fact that we live long enough to exhale after inhaling,
Or wake again from a night of sleep, is truly a miracle.

BZHI BRGYA PA LAS KYANG , NUS PA MED PAS 'BYUNG KUN LA, , TSOGS
PA ZHES BYA SKYE 'GYUR TE, , 'GAL BA RNAMS LA BDE'O ZHES, , RNAM
PA KUN TU'ANG MI RIGS SO, , ZHES GSUNGS SO,

The *Four Hundred* again says,

Alone they have no power to give us birth;
Only as a group can the elements in us work.
It would be totally wrong for a person to say
That this inner war could ever feel good.

,SNYIGS MA LNGA SHIN TU BDO BA'I DUS YIN PAS TSE RING DU GNAS
PA'I LAS BZANG PO MTHU CHEN BSAGS PA CHES SHIN TU NYUNG BA
DANG , KHA ZAS LA SOGS PA'I SMAN RNAMS KYANG MTHU CHUNG
BAS NAD 'JOMS PA'I STOBS CHUNG ZHING , LONGS SPYAD PA RNAMS
KYANG BDE BAR ZHU NAS LUS KYI 'BYUNG BA CHEN PO RNAMS RGYAS
PAR 'GYUR BA'I MTHU BRI BAS BDE BAR 'JU DKA' ZHING ZHU BAS
KYANG PHAN 'DOGS PA CHUNG BA DANG , TSOGS KYI BSAGS RGYAB
CHUNG ZHING NYES SPYOD SHIN TU CHE BAS BZLAS BRJOD LA SOGS
PA YANG MTHU CHUNG BAR SONG NAS TSE BSRING BA SOGS SHIN TU
DKA'O,

These are the days when the five degenerations have spread to a very great extent, when it is infinitely difficult to find anyone who is capable of amassing the powerful good karma necessary for producing any very long lifetime. Food and other kinds of medicinal substances have little potency, and lack any great

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

power to stop diseases.

The general ability of the body to break down easily the things we eat and drink, so that the great elements within the body can be properly nourished, is declining. We find it difficult to digest these things, and even after they are digested they have little beneficial effect on our bodies.

There is an additional problem caused by the fact that we are able to collect only small quantities of good karmic energy, whereas we commit massive amounts of bad deeds. These diminish greatly the power of practices such as repeating a number of mantras, and so it is extremely difficult to use these methods to lengthen our lifespan, and such.

,GSON RKYEN RNAMS KYANG 'CHI RKYEN DU MA GYUR PA MED DE, MI 'CHI BA'I PHYIR DU NI BZA' BTUNG DANG GNAS KHANG DANG GROGS LA SOGS PA RNAMS TSOL LA, DE DAG KYANG BZA' BTUNG HA CANG MANGS PA DANG HA CANG NYUNGS PA DANG MI 'PHROD PA LONGS SPYAD PA SOGS DANG , GNAS KHANG RDIB PA DANG MDZA' BOS BSLUS PA LA SOGS PA'I SGO NAS 'CHI BA'I RKYEN DU 'GYUR BAS NA 'CHI BA'I RKYEN DU MA SONG BA'I GSON PA'I RKYEN MI SNANG NGO ,

Beyond all this is the fact that there is nothing at all that we use to keep ourselves alive that cannot also turn into something that kills us. We spend our lives searching for food and drink, or a place to stay, or friends or the like, with the intent that they help keep us from dying.

But they can all turn into something that kills us instead. If we eat or drink too much, or too little, or ingest something which is not clean or the like, it can kill us. Our house can collapse on us, and our friends can cheat us, and they can all in the end lead us to our deaths. You literally cannot find anything that is supposed to keep you alive that cannot kill you as well.

,GZHAN YANG GSON PA NYID 'CHI BA'I DON DU ZHUGS PA YIN PAS, GSON PA'I RKYEN MANG YANG DE LA YID BRTAN DU MI RUNG STE, RIN CHEN PHRENG BA LAS, 'CHI BA'I RKYEN NI MANG BA STE, , GSON PA YI NI NYUNG ZAD CIG, DE DAG RNAMS KYANG 'CHI BA'I YANG , , DE BAS RTAG TU CHOS MDZOD CIG, CES GSUNGS SO,

Moreover, life itself is directed at dying; even if there were more objects that

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

were supposed to function to keep us alive, we could hardly put any faith in them. As the *String of Jewels* says,

The things that can kill us are many;
Those that keep us alive are precious few,
And act as well to kill us.
We must as such do all the Dharma we can.

,LUS SHIN TU NYAM CHUNG BAS NA, NAM 'CHI NGES MED BSAM PA NI,
LUS CHU'I DBU BA LTAR SHIN TU NYAM CHUNG BAS NA GNOD PA
CHEN PO MI DGOS PAR TSER MA ZUG PA LTA BU'I GNOD PA LA SNYAD
BTAGS NAS KYANG SROG 'JIG PAR 'GYUR BAS NA, 'CHI RKYEN THAMS
CAD KYIS GZHOM PAR YANG SHIN TU SLA BA YIN TE, BSHES SPRINGS
LAS, SA DANG LHUN PO RGYA MTSO NYI MA BDUN, , 'BAR BAS BSREGS
PA'I LUS CAN 'DI DAG KYANG , , THAL BA YANG NI LUS PAR MI 'GYUR
NA, , SHIN TU NYAM CHUNG MI LTA SMOS CI 'TSAL, , ZHES GSUNGS SO,

Next is the contemplation that there is no certainty when we will die, for the reason that (6) our bodies are extremely fragile. Our bodies really are very fragile, very much like a bubble, and it requires no great injury to destroy our life-force: even something like the prick of a thorn, if we disregard it, can kill us. The point is that none of the things that can kill us has to try very hard to kill us. The *Letter to a Friend* says,

Great edifices like the earth itself, and the mountain
At the center of the world, and the seas, all burn
When the seven suns rise, and not even dust remains.
Who needs to mention then that fragile thing called man?

,DE LTAR BSAMS PA'I MTHAR 'CHI BDAG GIS LUS SROG NAM 'JOMS NGES
PA MI SNANG BAS LONG YOD MI BYA BAR DA LTA NYID NAS CHOS BYA
BAR THAG GCOD PA'I ZHE DAM MANG DU BYA STE, K'A NI KA'I SBRINGS
YIG LAS, 'CHI BDAG SU DANG MI BSHES PA, , GLO BUR DAG TU 'BAB
'GYUR BAS, , SANG DAG BYA ZHES MA GZHES PAR, , DAM PA'I CHOS LA
BSNYUR TE MDZOD, , 'DI SANG DENG NI 'DI BYA ZHES, , BYA BA MI LA
BZANG PO MIN, , NAM ZHIG KHYOD NI MED 'GYUR BA'I, , SANG DE
GDON MI ZA BAR 'ONG , , ZHES DANG ,

Once you have taken this contemplation to its end, it will occur to you clearly

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

that there is no certainty at all when the Lord of Death will decide to come and destroy your body and life. You will realize that you have no time left; and then you must make many solemn vows to yourself, you must resolve to practice the Dharma here and now. As the *Epistle of Kanika* states,

The Lord of Death is partial to no one;
When he strikes, he does so suddenly.
Don't ever say then you'll "Do it tomorrow";
Practice the Dharma instead with speed.

It's no good thing for a human being
Ever to say, "I'll do it tomorrow";
The tomorrow when you are no longer here
Is a day that beyond any doubt will come.

RNAL 'BYOR GYI DBANG PHYUG SHR'AI DZA GA TA MI TRA A'A NAN
TAS KYANG , SA BDAG JI LTAR G-YAR PO'I LUS, , NAD MED RGUD MED
BDER GNAS PA, , DE NYID TSE NA SNYING PO BLANG , , NA 'CHI RGUD
PAS 'JIGS MED BGYI, , GANG TSE NA RGAS RGUD SOGS NA, , DRAN YANG
DE TSE CI BGYIR MCHIS, , ZHES GSUNGS PA LTAR RO, , RTZA BA GSUM
LAS KYANG GAL CHE SHOS NAM 'CHI NGES MED BSAMS NAS BLO SNA
'GYUR BA 'DI NYID YIN PAS 'BAD PAR BYA'O,

That lord of accomplished practitioners, Shri Jagata Mitra Ananda, has also spoken:

The spirit lord will take this form you rent,
In health, in its prime, in an hour of contentment,
And rip away in this very moment its heart.

You sit there now unconcerned by disease or death,
By decline and the like, but when the day arrives
To meet them face to face you'll know nothing to do.

Of all the three principles, this one, the contemplation that it is totally uncertain when you will die, is the most important. Since this attitude is the critical one, you must do your best to grow it within you.

,GSUM PA 'CHI BA'I TSE CHOS MA GTOGS PA GZHAN GANG GIS KYANG

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

MI PHAN PA BSAM PA GSUM NI, DE LTAR 'JIG RTEN PHA ROL TU 'GRO
DGOS PAR MTHONG BA NA, DE'I TSE GNYEN NAM BSHES JI LTAR BRTZE
ZHING GDUNG BA CHE BAS MTHA' BSKOR YANG GCIG KYANG 'KHRID
SA MED, YID DU 'ONG BA'I NOR GYI PHUNG PO JI SNYED YOD KYANG
RDUL PHRAN TZAM ZHIG KYANG 'KHYER DU MED DE, LHAN CIG SKYES
PA'I SHA RUS KYANG 'DOR NA GZHAN LTA CI SMOS,

Here finally are the three reasons behind the third principle, which is that--when you do die--nothing but the Dharma can be of the least help to you.

So we have seen that we will be forced to pass on to a future life. When the day comes, you can be surrounded by any number of friends and relatives, by people who love you and whose hearts are torn, but (7) there is not a single one of them that you can take along with you. You can be the owner of a great heap of lovely riches, any amount of them at all, but (8) you cannot carry along with you a single molecule. When you die (9) you must give up even the flesh and bone that are part of your very being; it's ridiculous to think then that you could keep anything else.

DES NA TSE 'DI'I PHUN SUM TSOGS PA THAMS CAD KYIS KYANG BDAG
'DOR LA, BDAG GIS KYANG 'DI DAG DOR NAS 'JIG RTEN GZHAN DU 'GRO
BA ZHIG NGES PAR 'ONG , DE YANG DE RING 'ONG SNYAM DU BSAMS
LA, DE'I DUS SU NI CHOS 'BA' ZHIG SKYABS DANG MGON DANG DPUNG
GNYEN DU 'GYUR TSUL BSAM PAR BYA STE, K'A NI KA'I SPRINGS YIG
LAS, RNAM SMIN 'BYIN PA SNGON LAS KYIS, , KHYOD NI YONGS SU
BTANG GYUR PA, , GSAR PA'I LAS DANG RJES 'BREL ZHING , , 'CHI BDAG
GIS NI DRANGS PA NA, , DGE DANG SDIG PA MA GTOGS PAR, , 'GRO BA
THAMS CAD PHYIR LOG NAS, , 'GA' YANG KHYOD RJES MI 'BRANG BAR, ,
MKHYEN PAR MDZOD LA LEGS PAR SPYOD, , CES PA DANG ,

We can say then that each and every good thing of this life will send us away, and we too will send them away, and pass on to our next life: this is, simply, quite certain to happen. You must contemplate how this is coming to you today, and you must contemplate how, when the moment comes, it is only the Dharma which will be your refuge, and your protector, and your one true friend. As the *Epistle of Kanika* says,

The karma ripens, and all your deeds
From before abandon and leave you alone.

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Driven by all the new karma now,
You're forced ahead by the Lord of Death.

Everyone you've ever known
Is left behind, and only the good
Or bad you've done comes with you.
Please understand, and do only things that are right.

,SHR'AI DZA GA TA MI TRAS KYANG , LHA GCIG JI LTAR KHYOD 'BYOR
KYANG , , GSHEGS NAS 'JIG RTEN GZHAN BZHUD TSE, , MYA NGAM
THANG LA DGRAS BCOM LTAR, , GCIG PU SRAS MED BTZUN MO MIN, ,
NA BZA' MA MCHIS BSHES MA MCHIS, , RGYAL SRID MA MCHIS KHAB
MA MCHIS, , DPAG MED MTHU DPUNG MNGA' LAGS KYANG , , GZIGS SU
MA MCHIS GSAN MA MCHIS, , GCIG TZAM NYID CIG PHYI THAG GIS, ,
RJES SU 'BRANG BA'ANG MI MNGA' 'O, , MDOR NA NYID KYI MTSAN
TZAM YANG , , DE TSE MED NA GZHAN CI SMOS, , ZHES GSUNGS PA
LTAR RO,

It's just as Shri Jagata Mitra describes it:

Now matter how wealthy you are, Your Highness,
Once you die and slip to the world beyond,
It's like standing defeated in an empty desert—

Alone, without the Prince, without the Queen,
Without a stitch of clothing, without a friend,
Without a kingdom, without a country at all;
Solitary, single, not a trusted servant in sight.

To put it simply, how could you hope for more
In a land where you no longer own your own name?

,DE LTAR DAL BA DON CHE ZHING SHIN TU RNYED DKA' BA DANG
RNYED PAR DKA' YANG SHIN TU 'JIG SLA BA'I 'CHI BA DRAN PA BSAMS
NAS, 'JIG RTEN PHYI MA PHAN CHAD KYI GTAN BDE ZHIG SGRUB PAR
MI BYED NA, MA SHI TSUN CHOD KYI BDE BA BSGRUB PA DANG SDUG
BSNGAL SEL BA LA NI MI BAS DUD 'GRO RLABS CHE BA YOD PAS NA DE
DAG LAS KHYAD ZHUGS PA'I SPYOD PA ZHIG DGOS TE, GZHAN DU NA
BDE 'GRO'I RTEN RNYED KYANG MA RNYED PA DANG 'DRA STE, SPYOD

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

'JUG LAS, PHYUGS KYIS BSGRUBS NA'ANG MI DKON PA'I, , MNOG
CHUNG GANG YIN DE DON DU, , DAL 'BYOR PHUN TSOGS RNYED DKA'
'DI, , LAS KYIS MNAR BA RNAMS KYIS BCOM, , ZHES GSUNGS PA'I PHYIR
RO,

Thus it is then that you must contemplate upon the awareness of your death: the spiritual leisure you now possess is extremely valuable; it is extremely difficult to find; and beyond its being so hard to find it is also extremely easy to lose.

Suppose we fail even to attempt reaching something of ultimate benefit, for our next life and beyond; suppose instead we spend all the time from now up to the moment of our death in the pursuit of the things that make us feel good, and in avoiding the things that cause us pain.

Common animals are more skilled at this endeavor than we could ever be; we need to engage in some kind of activity that distinguishes us from beasts. Otherwise achieving the kind of life in a higher birth that we enjoy now is essentially the same as never having found it at all. As the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Life* puts it,

There are certain insignificant gains
That are not a difficult thing to attain
Even for a cow if he tries;

Yet there are those who suffer from karma
And waste this perfect leisure and fortune,
Achieved with such effort, on nothing more.

,DES NA SKYE DKA' SE BYUNG YANG LAM GYI GZHI YIN PAS 'BAD DGOS
TE, PO TO BA'I ZHAL NAS, NGED KYI SNANG SEL MI RTAG PA BSGOM PA
'DI RANG YIN TE NYE 'BREL DANG YO BYAD LA SOGS PA TSE 'DI'I SNANG
BA KUN BSAL NAS RANG GCIG PU GNYIS SU MED PAR TSE PHA ROL TU
PHYAD KYIS 'GRO BAR SHES NAS CHOS MIN PA CIS KYANG BYAR MED
SNYAM NAS TSE 'DI LA MA CHAGS PA ZHIG GDOD 'ONG, 'DI BLO LA MA
SKYES KYI BAR DU CHOS THAMS CAD KYI LAM 'GAGS NAS 'DUG PA YIN
GSUNG,

And so even though the awareness of your death may sometimes seem a difficult thing to attain, you must still make great efforts to do so, for it is the very

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

foundation of the path. Potowa too has said,

My guiding lamp is nothing but this meditation on my own impermanence. It helps me to clear away all my concern about the things of this life--my friends and possessions and so on--and realize that I will be flying away to my next life, alone, with no one to come along with me. Then I am truly able to stop my attachment to my current life, and maintain an intention never to do anything which is against the Dharma. As long as you find yourself unable to reach this state of mind, you will find too that the road to each and every part of the teaching is shut off to you.

DOL PA'I ZHAL NAS KYANG , ZHAR LA TSOGS GSOG PA DANG SGRIB PA SBYONG , LHA DANG BLA MA A GSOL BA 'DEBS SHING RUS SHING DANG BCAS NAS NAN TAN GYIS BSAMS NA, LO BRGYAR YANG MI SKYE SNYAM PA ZHIG KYANG 'DUS BYAS SO NA MI SDOD PAS CI ZHIG LTAR LA SKYE BA YIN GSUNG NGO ,

Dolpa once stated,

You must along the way undertake practices to amass the energy of good deeds, and to purify yourself of spiritual obstacles. So too you must make supplication to the angels, and to your Lama. If then you put all your heart into contemplating this attitude, if you focus on it, you will be able to attain it. Things produced by causes have a basic nature that they can never just stay the same, and you will find that you can arrive at certain kinds of attitudes that you thought you could never develop in a thousand years of trying.

,KA MA BA LA DMIGS PA SPO BAR ZHUS TZA NA SNGA MA SKYOR SKAD, 'PHRO NAS ZHUS TZA NA 'PHRO YE MA THOD PA ZHES GSUNG LO, , DE LTAR NA BLOS LCOGS NA SNGAR BSHAD PA BZHIN BSGOM ZHING , MA LCOGS NA RTZA BA GSUM LA RGYU MTSAN DGU JI LTAR 'TSAM PA RE BZUNG LA, GSOD SAR 'KHRID PA LA RGYAN BTAGS PA LTAR TSE 'DI'I BYA BA RNAMS LAS YID MA LOG GI BAR DU YANG DANG YANG DU BSGOM PAR BYA'O, , BSHES GNYEN BSTEN PA DANG DAL 'BYOR DANG MI RTAG PA'I SKOR RNAMS GSUNG RAB DGONGS 'GREL DANG BCAS PA GA NA 'DUG KYANG SKABS DE DANG DE'I NYAMS LEN DU SHES PAR BYAS NAS BSKYANGS NA RGYAL BA'I DGONGS PA RNAMS BDE BLAG TU

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

RNYED PAR 'GYUR TE SKABS GZHAN DU 'ANG DE LTAR SHES PAR BYA'O,

They say too that when someone would ask Kamawa if they could move on to a new spiritual topic he would say, "Work again on the old one." When they asked if he could finish up the old one, he would say, "There is no finish to the old one." So if your mind can handle it, do the meditation as I have described it above. If your mind cannot handle it, then try to absorb as many of the nine reasons for the three principles as fits your capacity.

Meditate over and over on your death until you gain a complete disgust for the activities of this life; until you can think of them like a man on his way to the site of his execution, stopping to put on some fine jewelry.

The subjects of how to serve a spiritual guide, of the spiritual fortune and leisure of this life, and of our impermanence are found throughout the supreme form of speech, the word of the Buddha, and the commentaries upon it. You must come to realize that these are instructions to be put into practice at each point where they occur, and so you should actually undertake them at each step.

If you do so, then you will be able to grasp the true intent of the victorious Buddhas quite easily. You should apply this advice to each of the other sections here as well.

[The following selection is a discussion of the distinction between the three tracks mentioned above and the three scopes as described in the teachings on the steps of the path to enlightenment (the lam-rim). The following selection is taken from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path (the Lam-rim chen-mo)* of Je Tsongkapa (ACIP electronic text S5392, f. 58b)]

,DE LA NYAN THOS DANG RANG SANGS RGYAS KYI THEG PA LAS
BRTZAMS TE JI SNYED CIG GSUNGS PA THAMS CAD NI SKYES BU 'BRING
DNGOS SAM 'BRING DANG THUN MONG BA'I CHOS SGOR DU 'DU STE,
SKYES BU 'BRING NI SRID PA MTHA' DAG LA SKYO BA BSKYED NAS SRID
PA LAS GROL BA'I THAR PA RANG GI DON DU THOB BYAR BYAS TE DE'I
THABS LAM BSLAB PA GSUM LA 'JUG PA YIN PA'I PHYIR TE,

All those teachings that were given from the point of view of the tracks of the

ACI Course III, Applied Meditation
Reading Three: The Six Conditions for Meditation

Listeners and the Self-Made Buddhas can be classified either as teachings that belong to the medium scope itself, or as teachings which are shared with the medium scope. This is because a person of the medium scope reaches a feeling of disgust for every form of this suffering circle of life, and works towards the goal of achieving--for his own sake--the goal of a freedom in which he is freed from the circle.

LAM SGRON LAS, SRID PA'I BDE LA RGYAB PHYOGS SHING , , SDIG PA'I
LAS LAS LDOG BDAG NYID, , GANG ZHIG RANG ZHI TZAM DON GNYER,
, SKYES BU DE NI 'BRING ZHES BYA, , ZHES GSUNGS PA'I PHYIR RO,

And this is so because *the Lamp for the Path* says,

Consider a person who has turned away
From pleasures of the circle of life,
And who has at this very same time turned back
From actions which are negative.
A person who thus is aspiring to
A state of peace for themselves Is the one that we refer to
As one of the "medium scope."