

Here is the explanation of the Rushan Exercises. This actually includes everything you need to attain the enlightenment. However, it should be noted, that Dzogchen is far more extensive. There are also Trekchö and Thögal, whereby the Trekchö containing further preparatory exercises.

## Rushans: The preliminary practices of Dzogchen

### Khorde Rushan: The Separation of Samsara and Nirvana

Here we will briefly introduce the Rushan practices of Dzogchen. The Rushans are the main preparation for entering into Dzogchen and for the discovering of the «nature of the mind» (*sems-nyid*) as opposed to the «mind» or thought process (REM). This distinction is very important for Dzogchen. The rushans represent the real Ngöndro (*sngon-'gro*) or the preliminary practices for Dzogchen.

The specific preliminary practices of Dzogchen consist of a first section, the «separation between Samsara and Nirvana» and a second, the «cultivation of the three doors». Both are said to be a part of Dzogchen, so you should practice them. The rest belongs in the domain of great Non-Action and the Natural State.

In fact, what these exercises propose is to arrive at the discovery of the natural state, and not to exercise it through the «exhaustion» of all our experiences. The goal of these practices is to prepare the mind for the discovery of the natural state. This is the actual Ngöndro of Dzogchen. In the Bön tradition, both types of Rushan are practiced in retreats of forty-nine days.

In these preliminary practices there are many visualization practices very much like the Tantra System. But these are not Dzogchen as such. The actual Rushans represent the real preliminary practices for Dzogchen, which introduce us to the nature of mind. Generally we speak of **outer Rushans**, **inner Rushans** and **secret Rushans**.

The **outer Rushans** aim to end the habitual tendencies to end the behaviors of extremes without mindfulness. This expresses or imitates the behavior of the living beings of the six realms, accumulated in the deeper layers of the mind.

With the preceding reflection on impermanence, taking refuge and developing the mind of awakening, the specific description of the practice is as follows:

First you need to train the behavior of the six classes of beings and the behavior of the three jewels.

## The impermanence of life

For this, first we should say something about preparatory practices (*sngon-'gro*) in general. These preparations are, in Buddhism and Bon, very important and very necessary. These represent the beginning or entrance to the practice of Tantra and Dzogchen. These serve as a guide, guiding us in what to do and what to think when we doing the practice.

It is very important for practitioners to deeply realize the nature of impermanence (*tse mi tagpa*). The more we understand the nature of impermanence and become familiar with it through daily practice in life, the more we are encouraged to practice regularly without delay, and this will also deepen our understanding of the reality.

There are the following six different methods with which the impermanence can be better realized:

### **1. Meditating on the impermanence through reflection on the changing and evolving universe**

The universe is constructed on the collective merit of living beings in the form of mountains, lakes, oceans and so on. All of this seems very stable and permanent to the human eye, but actually everything is evolving. For example, erosion can alter bodies of water. Mountains can always be altered by landslides, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and so on. Fire, wind, rain and other elements change the physical landscape.

### **2. Meditate on impermanence by reflecting on the state of beings in the universe and their birth, death and suffering**

In the same way that the universe evolves and will be destroyed, the living beings contained in this universe also evolve and perish through the three great crises of disease, famine and war. According to a quote from one of the Dho texts: «None of the sentient beings will remain forever without changing or dying».

We agree that because we are born, the end of our life is the death. But we can't really recognize this in depth as an experience of impermanence. In the

six realms of existence, none of our ancestors has lived forever from the beginning until now. They all followed the path of impermanence and died from various conditions, such as starvation, disease or war. Tönpa Shenrab and the great enlightened ones who have manifested in human form have shown us the path of death and transformation so that we can understand the true quality of the impermanence.

### **3. Meditate on the impermanence through reflection on the nature of the death and birth of the great enlightened ones and masters in the past**

The reason we take the great masters and enlightened ones as examples is to recognize that if they had to die, there is no chance for a normal sentient being to live forever. These great masters of Zhang Zhung and Tibet, who have empowered themselves to manifest at any time, also went through the process of death. They all followed the same path of dying, so we sentient beings should also be willing to follow the path of impermanence and give up our notion that life is permanent.

### **4. Meditate on the impermanence through reflection on the birth and death of living beings**

All beings, from the highest levels of the realm of the gods to the bottom of the hells, are impermanent. A quote from a Sang Ngag text says: «After birth there is no other way but to follow the path of death and there is no way of escaping the dominion of the lord of death».

There are always lessons to be learned about impermanence. If we think about the period of our present life, from birth to now, many of our relatives, neighbors and friends, from childhood through adolescence to old age, have suffered illness and death. From the most powerful people in the world to the poorest, everyone must follow the same path and everyone is equally limited by the nature of impermanence.

If we think about it, we can apply it to everyday life so that we will have a better understanding of the nature and quality of the impermanence. When the time comes for us to die, the death can be faced without regret or concern. We will be able to follow the path of wisdom and attain enlightenment more easily because of our experiences of the practice. When we are conscious, there are many aspects of daily life and the environment to enhance our realization of life's impermanence.

## **5. Meditating on the impermanence through reflection on various examples of transformations**

Let's think about the gradual changes in the seasons. Let's think about moments when we feel joy and how that same feeling can turn into sadness just because the way of the nature changes. We can also think about the changes in people's lives in this way.

For example, good relationships between families and friends can suddenly turn to anger and violence. Maybe someone we don't like and see as an enemy will suddenly become a good friend. Our health can be suddenly transformed by an illness. There are endless examples in our daily life and environment that show the real impermanence of life.

## **6. Meditate on the impermanence through reflection on the experience of death**

We living beings expect to live for a long time, unaware that death can occur anytime, anywhere, and under many circumstances. Because we lack an understanding of the true nature of uncertainty, we have the notion that since we are young, healthy, and have a family history of long life, we will live for a long time.

This conception is the main obstacle to realizing the true nature of impermanence. We may not have the same lifespan as other family members after all, because everyone has their own Karma and destiny. The death can come at any time and we have no choice but to follow the path.

When death comes, there is no way for us or our family to save our lives or postpone our deaths. The only help available comes from our virtuous deeds, our trust and faith in the enlightened ones, our teachers and the teachings (and their blessings) and our practice. Everything else in our life are just material objects which hinder us and cause us to be attached to our life. These things will hinder our path to enlightenment.

It is important to meditate on impermanence in order to detach from the sufferings of this cyclical world and to develop the wisdom of realization. This enables us to attain the enlightenment. Just understanding impermanence is not enough to attain enlightenment. It is important to realize that every

single moment of our lives can be affected by practice. Only in this way can selfishness and grasping be overcome.

## Karmic Causes and Consciousness

Karmic causes are discussed a great deal in the Buddhist and Bön texts. But how can we accumulate these? Virtuous actions such as generosity, not harming others, and so on, create positive karmic causes and bring joyful results in the future. But just talking about doing good deeds and avoiding bad deeds is not enough.

In our present life, we are experiencing here and now the fruits of what we have done in past lives. The past causes are not changed or transformed by our actions in this life because these have already been accumulated and their consequences are bound to come in the same way as the shadow that follows a body.

But we can affect future outcomes and future lives through our actions in the present that create new karmic causes. Therefore, in the present we can make a preparation for our future life. This starts with cultivating a good motivation.

Each of us, as an individual being, has body, speech and mind. Now, how do we develop good motivation in relation to these three? First, we should understand how we accumulate positive and negative karmic causes. We have eight types of consciousness and among them the most basic is the *Kunzhi Namshe* (*kun-gzhi rnam-shes*) or base consciousness.

We call it the basis of everything (*kun-gzhi*) because it is the basis for the transmission of all karmic traces or *Bagchaks* (*bag-chags*). It is called *Alayavijnana* in Sanskrit and all other consciousness evolves out from it. Second, there is the contaminated mind-consciousness or *Klishta-Manovijnana* (*nyon-shes*), and third, there is the mind-consciousness or *Manovijnana* (*yid-shes*). Finally there are the five sense-consciousnesses and that makes a total of eight *Namshes* or consciousnesses.

The *Madhyamaka* philosophy asserts that there are only six types of consciousness: the five types of sense consciousness and the mental consciousness. According to the *Madhyamaka*, there is ignorance here, so the contaminated mental consciousness (*Klishta-Manovijnana*), no special consciousness and so there are only six types, while both *Chittamatra* philosophy and Tantra and Dzogchen teach the work of consciousness and the transmission of the karmic causes related to these eight types.

How do these eight work? The five kinds of sense-consciousness work in connection with the corresponding sense-organs and sense-objects. All three, which are the sense organs, the sense object and the sense consciousness, must be present for it to become a sense perception.

But then this raw sense data has to be associated with memories (*dran-pa*) and the mind (*yiḍ*) in order for this raw sense data to be organized into a recognizable object which can then be identified by a name. This work is done through the mental consciousness, and so the five sense consciousnesses act like servants, constantly collecting data, and are governed by the mental consciousness, which is like their lord or king. When the mind is a powerful ruler, it sends its five faithful servants to engage in various kinds of activities to their capacity.

The eye-consciousness captures forms, shapes, colors, and so on, and brings them back to its master. The ear consciousness and the rest works in a similar way.

It's kind of like bees, which takes nectar from flowers everywhere and return it to the hive to be used to make honey. Our perceptions are like this honey; the raw sensory data of the senses must be converted into perceptions by the mind.

Then, at the end of this process we are aware of the perception but not of the actual material, the raw sensory data, from which it was constructed. The sense-consciousness, like the worker bees, makes no judgment of perception as good or bad; it doesn't judge. It is the mental awareness that makes the decision good or bad.

And then the perception mixed with that judgment, the *Kunzhi* or basic consciousness, is imprinted on of how to make an imprint on soft clay. This reaction to the original cognition made by the mental consciousness is stored there and in our ignorance we do not focus on our actual immediate external experience but we focus on this data stored in the *Kunzhi* and think of «self» what that is, we think it's appropriate or we think it's «mine» and so we pick it up and become attached to it.

Thus the focus of the attention is on the data stored in the *Kunzhi* and not on the reality. Thereby the five sense consciousnesses are like the servants running all over the world to collect wealth to bring back to the house of their master, the spiritual consciousness, which is like the king. He gathers together all this richness of the senses and agrees with it, and then he puts it in his treasury or storehouse; this is the *Kunzhi*.

But he does not enjoy this treasure; this is done by his wife, the *Klishta-Manovijnana* or contaminated mental consciousness. It is she who thinks: «All this is my treasure,

I love it!» So this is how we collect karmic causes and these are deposited in the *Kunzhi*. But karmic causes are not just any material, so there are always additional rooms in the *Kunzhi* Warehouse for more. There is no limit here, because we have accumulated karmic causes over an infinity of past lives from beginningless time.

When we go to sleep at night, the five sense consciousnesses dissolve into the *Kunzhi*. During the waking state the five senses are focused on the outside world, but during sleep they return to the *Kunzhi* like a turtle withdraws its limbs into its shell when frightened.

During dreamless sleep there is only the presence of *Kunzhi*, but during the sleep there are also times when we have dreams. At this time the mental consciousness comes into operation again, but the five senses are still inactive. The material of dreams comes from within, from the *Kunzhi*, rather than from without with the senses. The most of our dreams at night are linked to the memories of the previous day, because this material was freshly stored into the *Kunzhi*.

But in deeper levels there are also traces of past life memories. Everything from there is in the *Kunzhi*, our entire past over countless lifetimes; nothing has been lost. So dreams arise from the causes that are stored in the *Kunzhi*.

The after-death experience of the Bardo is also very similar to the dream state. The *Kunzhi* is there all the time; it will be not destroyed by an individual death. All of the past karmic traces are in the *Kunzhi Namshe* and they are the causes of the arising of the karmic visions in the Bardo of existence, the *Sidpa Bardo* (*srid-pa bar-do*).

In the Bönpo tradition we find Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen, and in all three the existence of the Bardo between death and rebirth is taught. When our mind experiences the death and leaves the lifeless body, our mind stream continues to have experiences because the karmic causes in the *Kunzhi Namshe* still remain.

We can have gross thoughts connected to the passions as well as subtle thoughts connected to the movements of subtle psychic energy (*rlung*, Skt. *Prana*), and both can have effects. There is a union of mind and subtle Prana that appears here, and this union is necessary for the rebirth.

Some schools consider that it is the *Kunshi Namshe*, the storehouse or base consciousness, itself that takes rebirth, but the *Madhyamaka* denies this, claiming that it is the mental consciousness (*mano-vijnana*) that does experiences the rebirth.



In any case, this spiritual consciousness functions in the Bardo. We see and feel as we do in real life or in a dream. We feel that we are in a body with all its sense operations, even if it is not a material body but a mind-made subtle body (*yid lus*). When we wake up from a dream, we know that the dream was unreal and not true. We realize it was just a dream.

But actually we are in the same conditions with the same feelings whether we are dreaming or waking. The same happens in the intermediate state of the Bardo.

There is no exact time limit for the Bardo experience; 49 days is just a custom. We have the same feeling in the Bardo that we have in the dream state. At that moment we think that the dream state is unreal and untrue, while the waking state is real and true. But they are both the same condition and arise from karmic causes.

Karmic causes lead to our karmic visions, whether in dream, waking, or Bardo. And they are conditioning our future rebirth. So we should be conscious and conscientious about accumulating positive karmic causes.

The accumulation of karmic causes by the mind (*yid*, Skt. *Manas*) is fundamental and crucial. The mind is the great gatherer. For example, we can have a perception, the mind judges it, and we have an emotional response of anger. The mind then collects these complex thoughts and places them in the *Kunzhi Namshe*. He memorizes this and keeps it in the vast *Kunzhi* Storehouse.

But how can we prevent this process? How can we prevent the association of emotional defilements with ignorance? Ignorance is the hardest thing to stop of all because we have been accustomed to ignorance over a long period of time. And she distorts everything; she distorts how we see reality, like a yellow dye on the lens of our glasses that yellows everything we see. This makes it very difficult to see things clearly. This distortion is the result of ignorance and passions.

All our different kinds of consciousness are mixed up with the habits of ignorance; only just before we attain Buddhahood do we finally purify this radical and fundamental ignorance. But otherwise it is very difficult to cleanse ourselves of it.

When we look at the world we don't see what is real, and we don't see what is already deposited in our karmic causes. Our vision of the outside world is really a projection of our own inner state; the outer forms we perceive are influenced and distorted by our mind. The external object that we perceive does not exist internally, so it is our ignorance that looks back on itself and conceives the object as substantial and real.



As a result of this misjudgment, the passions arise as emotional reactions and impulses. This is how all passions or negative emotions are generated. If ignorance were not present from the earliest beginning, passions would not appear. Now let's look back within ourselves and see how this ignorance works.

For example, if we intend to go to war, we should first know who our enemy is and what his capabilities are. We don't just jump right into the fight. So we need to realize what the emotional defilements are and how they work because it is through these defilements that we accumulate negative karmic causes. But there is also the possibility of accumulation of positive karmic causes through acts of generosity, the meditation on a Buddha image, and so on.

There are two main types of karmic causes here: **collective** and **individual**. For example, all human beings have the same karmic cause for human rebirth and for the human karmic vision.

That is why we, as humans, see the world in the same way. But the *Devas*, *Asuras* and *Pretas* see the world very differently from the way we humans do because they have different collective karmic causes for doing so. All we humans see the sea in the same way, but the sea looks very different to a fish or a Naga that lives on the water in its dimension.

We also have our individual karmic causes that put us beyond our individual existence and circumstances. For example there is a man and some people see him as a friend and others see him as an enemy even though it's the same man. This is in accordance with individual karmic causes.

For himself, he is none of those things. Nothing has an inherent existence, but everything depends on the causes of the perception. When a single human dies, his part in the collective vision of humanity will be dissolved, just as when the sun finally sets in the west, all its rays go but the sky remains. So even if the individual cause dissolves, the collective cause remains because all other people are still participating.

Even it is said that there are no rules in Dzogchen, there is no question of just going over everything and doing what we want. This is because, unless we are actually in the Natural State that the karmic conditions continue as long as the mind works.

Some teachings have a direct meaning while others have an indirect meaning. So when we hear the instructions given in Dzogchen texts, it is very important to understand the context. It is important not to confuse and mix up these different types of meanings.

So the main thing for us here is to accumulate the ten virtues in relation to our activities of body, speech and mind. To do this, we should first know the ten non-virtues and their causes.

## The non-virtues deeds

The non-virtues deeds (*mi gewi le*) are caused by the five poisons (dhug nga) and the result of the ten non-virtues actions with their fruits. According to one of the Dho texts, it is essential to overcome non-virtues deed, identify the poisons that cause them, and then avoid them. Without purification or overcoming the five poisons, there is no way to attain enlightenment.

Just as a doctor must diagnose the cause of an illness and then prescribe the right medicines to cure us, we must recognize how the five poisons affect us and then apply the antidotes through the practice. Through this practice, our awareness grows to slowly subdue the power of the five poisons, each of which is described below:

## The Five Poisons

### 1. Ignorance (*Timug*)

Ignorance keeps us in utter darkness and dullness that we don't see or understand the true nature of the mind. We are unable to see the clear difference between virtuous and non-virtuous deeds, or to recognize the power of the law of cause and effect. Ignorance is very much like things that cannot be seen in their full beauty because of the fog in the monsoon season.

### 2. Attachment (*Döchag*)

We need to be able to part with what we have and stop wanting more and more. The desire for possessions has no end and no possibility of satisfaction. This is the suffering caused by the poison of attachment.

This is similar to drinking salt water when we are thirsty. Our thirst will not be quenched and we will continue to suffer from the lack of water. Another example would be seeing something that doesn't belong to us, but that we would very much like to have, even though we know it's impossible to have. This bubbling desire is very similar to boiling water that keeps bubbling over the fire when we put the fire out.

It is important to detach from these material conditions and practice the nature of impermanence. We should know how to let go or use these objects in a better way. Who knows what the life will bring next and how long these material goods will remain in our power?

All of this happens because there is a lack of understanding and contentment. We need to understand how to be content with the conditions we live in and appreciate them for what they are. Otherwise we will never be satisfied. There is a saying in Tibet: «If we are happy in the practice as we are doing now, then we will be happy and able to overcome attachments».

### **3. Anger (*Zhedang*)**

Anger is the most powerful of the five poisons. The benefits of a lifetime of practice can be destroyed by just a minute's intense anger. In order to overcome anger, it is necessary to always be aware and attentive to our inner thoughts.

Anger can arise when someone we don't like uses harsh language towards us. Immediately we can be disturbed in our inner peace and react with harsh words. We lose the control of our body's actions and the energy of the inner fire element heats up as if fanned by a strong wind.

We should think carefully and be aware to overcome this poison. Instead of reacting in a negative way, we should try to understand that the anger within us is more dangerous and harmful than any external enemy. We can control this inner enemy through the practice of love, kindness, and compassion for all sentient beings. This practice will also help us to overcome all external enemies.

### **4. Pride (*Ngagyal*)**

Pride defines that we value ourselves as better than others. This means that we think that we are in a higher position or better educated than others, or that we think we have more wealth or knowledge. We always try to make others look worse and lower than ourselves. This attitude and behavior does not let us see the qualities of others and prevents us from learning from them.

We must recognize our interdependence. There is always something we can learn from the people around us. It is necessary to start living and thinking with real openness so that we can learn from others. There is always someone who is better informed or stronger than us or with other qualities that are not as strong in us.

Others are worthy of our respect. When we are unable to overcome our pride, we are like an iron ball that cannot absorb water, even though it has been left out in the rain for years. Likewise, although we are surrounded by wise and well-read people, we have no way of receiving their wisdom because our pride completely blocks the access to their knowledge.

## **5. Jealousy (*Trakdog*)**

Jealousy can arise when we see that others are content and happy: they have a better life, are in a higher position, or have more wealth than we. This shows that our own abilities to accept and enjoy the happiness and contentment of others are very narrow. Our lack of understanding of the vastness of our own inner ability causes us to believe that good things only happen to others and never to us.

Caught in our jealousy, we create negative thoughts and actions to prevent good conditions for others. We fear that we have a loss from someone else's success.

Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that we ourselves enjoy the same circumstances and that others have the right to enjoy them as well. Everyone deserves happiness and contentment. The longing for better things is natural to humans.

With practice, we can train our minds to be more flexible and open, so that we can more easily accept good situations for ourselves and others.

For all sentient beings, and especially for us as practitioners, the most dangerous enemies are our own five poisons. If we don't rid ourselves of these poisons, we cannot attain the enlightenment. However, every sentient being has the ability to overcome the five poisons.

We should be vigilant in each of our actions so that we can correct our mistakes and commit to not doing so again. Unless we keep our attention on these poisons constantly, we will not be able to subdue them, and we will gradually sink lower and lower under their influence. The precious life of that perfect human body will come to an end without having fulfilled its purpose of attaining enlightenment and helping all sentient beings to break free from the suffering of this cyclical world.

We can, through practice, apply the teachings as an antidote to the poisons, in accordance with the path of turning away from *Dho* (*Pong Lam Dho*), the path of transforming of *Sang Ngag* (*Gyur Lam Ngag*) or the path of self-liberation or Dzogchen (*Dol Lam Dzogpa Chenpo*). It is important to choose which of these paths brings the most benefits in daily life and which one is most appropriate according to one's level of consciousness.

The ten vices are mainly caused by the influence of the five poisons. These are classified into the three non-virtuous deeds of the body (*lū kyi mi gewa sum*), the four non-virtuous deeds of speech (*ngag kyi mi gewa zhi*), and the three non-virtuous deeds of the mind (*yid kyi mi gewa sum*), each of which follows is described.

## The three deeds non-virtuous of the body

### **1. Taking a Life (*Sog Chodpa*)**

This can be generated by three of the five main poisons: anger, ignorance, and attachment. For example, life can be taken during a war that is mainly based on anger. We can also take the life because of attachment, like wanting to eat meat or wanting to have a fur coat.

We can also take another's life because of ignorance or lack of a clear understanding of the positive and negative causes and effects. We believe that we are not involved in killing any being, but in fact every human being is involved in this non-virtuous act.

Whether we are vegetarians or non-vegetarians, we sustain ourselves by killing animals and plants. Even by walking on the ground we kill microscopic creatures. For this reason, we should all purify ourselves continuously from these negative deeds.

### **2. Stealing (*Ma Jin Lenpa*)**

This is the desire to obtain a material object, directly or indirectly through violence or robbery. Our intention is to own something, no matter what we have to do to get it. Our attachments can lead us to commit this act. It is very important to develop detachment from material objects in order to avoid the desire to steal.

### **3. Sexual Misconduct (*Log Yem*)**

This affects lay practitioners, especially when they take vows of austerity, on special days such as Tönpa Shenrab's birthday, the birth and death days of other great masters, and the full moon days in the monasteries. Having a sexual relationship without the partner's consent is also considered sexual misconduct.

## The four non-virtuous acts of speech

### **1. Lies (*Zün Mawa*)**

This non-virtuous act has two aspects: lying with the intent to harm or deceive others, and lying with no intent to harm anyone. The most serious lie is to give another person the impression that we have wisdom or knowledge that we do not actually have.

Telling our teacher that we have visions of God, deities, or other visions that we have never actually seen is a lie that has extremely negative results. It is common for people to try to get some temporary benefit from lying without caring about the resulting ill effects.

It is wiser to consider the long-term consequences for yourself and others before deciding to lie, as lying can cause suffering. Lies, unlike truth, do not have the energy of eternal power.

### **2. Intentionally causing trouble between friends (*Tra Ma*)**

This non-virtuous act will occur through the jealousy and narrowness of thought when we generate negative thoughts toward friends or community. We destroy true closeness between people when our intention is to lie to break up a friendship.

This is a powerful negative act because we have hurt the innocent hearts of true friends. We have planted among them the seeds of poison that will grow until the friends realize our deceitful intent. Even if we then purify our negative thoughts, we will not be free from receiving the negative results of that action because we were the source.

We should realize that our negative behavior will affect us as well as others. Instead, we should cultivate positive merit and virtuous deeds that can lead to happiness and joy, and bring back together those who have been separated by intentional malice.

### **3. Harsh Words (*Tsig Tsup*)**

This non-virtuous act is one of the most powerful acts that can harm us. There is a Tibetan proverb that says «The harsh word is not a weapon, but it will cut your heart in pieces». When we talk to someone, it's important to be aware of the words we're using. Harsh words don't necessarily have to be spoken out loud or in anger.

Words spoken politely can also harm beings even when the person concerned is not present. Harsh language breeds very energetic anger or jealousy, so we must be careful how we address family, friends, elders, and others. Pointing out other people's weaknesses in public is like putting a finger in their eyes. To overcome this behavior, one must learn how to speak properly with genuine, loving, and honest intent.

#### **4. Gossip (*Ngag Khyal*)**

This non-virtuous act can occur with or without intention. For example, we often spend our time talking about things with friends with no particular goal in mind. This is unintentional gossip. But intentional gossip can also be created to set in scene. Basically, gossip means that we spend our time talking or laughing without aim or purpose. This activity is called wasting time.

The three non-virtuous deeds of the mind

#### **1. Negative Thoughts (*Ngen Sem*)**

This non-virtuous act is the generation of negative thoughts. When we see an object we would like to have, it can stay in our mind and our admiration for it can grow stronger. It gets our attention even if we don't own it. Another example is when seeing someone having a happy and successful life, we can create evil thoughts that he or she should not experience joy or success.

#### **2. Harmful thoughts towards others (*Nod Sem*)**

This non-virtuous act is similar but more violent than the negative thoughts (*ngen sem*). It means willingness to cause harm to others or to destroy something in order to cause misery. When we see the joy and happiness of others or see them living in luxury, and this fuels our harmful thoughts, we want to destroy their happiness, hoping bad things will happen to them or we direct harmful thoughts towards them, which is called *nod sem*.

When we want someone to lose something, or on a larger scale, when we are contemplating killing someone, we are more apt to act under the influence of anger. There are also aspects of jealousy where harmful thoughts towards others are involved.

#### **3. Wrong views towards the teachings (*Log Ta*)**



This non-virtuous act of the mind is a result of a lack of understanding of the essential spiritual aspects of the teachings. Depending on Karma, there are a variety of views those appearance could possibly be called wrong, such as disbelief in the truth of the law of cause and effect or disbelief in past births and future rebirths.

Other erroneous views cannot accept that enlightenment is attained as a result of practice or cannot accept the truth and quality of the Bön teachings. All of these support and follow the path of wrong views.

As described in the text by *Mutek Zar Chö Ten Tsik Tek Dho*, there are 360 different types of wrong views, which can be simplified to 99 types of wrong views. In the simplest classification, there are two main infidel traditions: eternalism (*tag ta*) and nihilism (*che ta*).

If we see the teachings as insignificant or unimportant, we block ourselves from entering the spiritual path and benefiting from its positive qualities. Therefore, it is important for a better human existence to trust, believe in and respect all aspects of the teachings. The end of our life is death. All of us will experience the result of our own negative actions and thoughts at that very last moment.

All negative actions of our mind are intended to harm others intentionally. All harmful thoughts toward others indicate a lack of understanding of love and compassion. Therefore it is important to reflect on the nature of love and compassion in order to create more positive thoughts about others and life in general. This practice also helps us to develop openness and flexibility.

The law of cause and effect is simply true. Every aspect of our virtuous deeds will lead to peace, happiness and goodness. In the same way, all non-virtuous deeds of body, mind, and speech will cause us and others to experience suffering and unhappiness. The best way to purify our negative actions is to develop our inner wisdom and engage us in the practice.

To rid ourselves of non-virtuous deeds, we should practice generosity with pure intention. This is of merit, even if one only offers a single flower or incense stick. We can also generate the things of offering mentally in our mind.

## **The Ten Virtuous Deeds**

Practitioners must strictly practice the following ten virtuous deeds (*gewi le chu*):

1. Avoiding taking the life of another being,

2. Practice generosity,
3. Practice mindfulness,
4. After moral discipline overcoming sexual misconduct,
5. Telling the truth and avoiding lies,
6. Trying to bring together friends who have broken up (rather than breaking up friends by spreading rumors),
7. Speaking peacefully and calmly instead of using a harsh language,
8. Engage us in the practice (doing prayers and recitations instead of wasting time on gossip),
9. Being free from evil thoughts towards others (generating love and kindness instead of harmful thoughts towards others) and
10. Being free from wrong views on the teachings (realizing the law of truth of cause and effect and walking the spiritual path).

The result of our virtuous and non-virtuous actions either compels us to be born in this cyclical world of suffering or liberates us to attain the enlightenment.

### Methods of Purification

Even the Buddha himself was once an ordinary person like us. But how did he achieve the realization? He followed the teachings of the earlier Buddhas and practiced those teachings. In doing so, he realized enlightenment and liberation from Samsara, and in return he passed the teachings on to others.

Anyone who follows the Buddha's teachings will surely achieve results and purify negative karmic causes. Then that person will be like a man who has caught smallpox in the past; he will never catch any again because he is immune. The sickness of samsara will never come again. And this is the determination of the following teachings.

In the Bön tradition we have three main methods for completing the liberation from the karmic causes of passion or emotional defilement: Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen. Let's take the example of finding a poisonous plant that blocking our path.

According to the Sutra method, we must avoid these, otherwise we will be burned up and completely destroyed. The methods employed by the Sutras represent the path of renunciation (*spong lam*).

But it is not necessary to destroy the poisonous plant because if we know the right method we can turn the poison into medicine. This is the method of the Tantras and represents the path of transformation (*sgyur lam*).

But if we don't touch the plant and just leave it alone, the poison won't harm us. This is the method of Dzogchen that represents the path to self-liberation (*rang grollam*).

The Sutra system uses various antidotes to control the passions, while the Tantra system uses visualization to transform the negative karmic vision into the positive pure vision in our imagination. This is done with the mind, but the method in Dzogchen is different because Dzogchen goes beyond the mind.

When the emotional defilements arise, we don't follow them or support them in any way. Also, no antidotes or transformations are to be sought here. When they appear, we leave them as they are and they will resolve through themselves.

Their energy will dissipate. They go away and do not harm us. In Dzogchen we leave everything as it is and it frees by itself. The thoughts cannot harm and they leave no traces. These are the most important methods for purifying the *Kleshas* or passions and purifying negative karmic causes.