

The Essence of the  
Vinaya Ocean  
*and*  
The Namtse Dengma  
Getsul Training

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Je Tsongkhapa

Translated by Geshe Graham Woodhouse



**The Essence of the Vinaya Ocean**

**and**

**The Namtse Dengma Getsul Training**



# The Essence of the Vinaya Ocean

*'dul ba rgya mtsho'i snying po*

and

# The Namtse Dengma Getsul Training

*dge tshul gyi bslab bya gnam rtse ldeng ma*

by

Je Tsongkhapa

Translated by Geshe Graham Woodhouse

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*Restricted to the ordained*

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## Technical Note

For Indian names in the main text *ch*, *sh* and *ṣh* are used instead of the more common *c*, *ś* and *ṣ* for the sake of ease of pronunciation by non-specialists. In the notes and bibliography the usual transliteration system for Sanskrit is used.



# **The Essence of the Vinaya Ocean**



# The Essence of the Vinaya Ocean

OM the best of happiness!

salutation

I bow down to the Knower of All.

homage

The means by which to easily reach  
The abode of freedom, essence fine  
Of teachings by Those Gone to Bliss  
That which is *prātimokṣha* called,  
I shall explain just so in six,  
Its nature and divisions, each  
Identified, base where produced,  
The cause of loss and benefit.

promise to compose<sup>1</sup>

As cause, the thought to certainly  
Forsake the world, it is to cease  
From harming others and its base.  
Our higher and lower schools assert  
These two: that either it has form,  
An act of body or of speech,  
Or it is a continual  
Intent to abandon and its seed.

nature<sup>2</sup>

The *prātimokṣha* has eight types,  
The one-day, layman's, woman's both  
And getsul, male and female too,  
Gelobma, gelong, gelongma,  
The first three those of householders,  
The last five vows of those gone forth.

divisions<sup>3</sup>

Four roots, four branches, eight things are  
Abandoned by the one-day vows.  
The root four are unchastity,

each identified  
one-day<sup>4</sup>

Theft, taking life and speaking lies.  
The branch four are beds great or high,  
Strong drink, dance, garlands and suchlike,  
And eating after noon has passed.

To kill, steal, lie, improper sex,  
Intoxicants, these five things are  
Abandoned by lay followers' vows.  
Lay followers of six types maintain  
The one, some, most, all, chastity,  
Or refuge, lay commitments to,  
In turn, abandon one, two, three  
Of the root four, or wrong desire,  
Unchastity, or otherwise  
To go for refuge, that alone.

lay follower<sup>5</sup>

Four roots, six branches: ten things are  
Abandoned by the getsul vows.  
Dance, garlands and suchlike as two,  
Take gold and silver, plus the three:  
Six branches thus are specified.  
Applying to one's preceptor,  
Abandoning the aspect of  
A householder, assuming that  
Of one gone forth: with lapses from  
These three, thirteen abandonments.

getsul

Then, having taken getsul vows,  
The vows to abandon six root deeds  
And six concordant to those are  
Together a gelobma's vows.  
No going on a road alone,  
No swimming over lake or stream.  
No physical contact with a man,  
Nor sitting on a seat with him.  
No acting as a go-between,

gelobma<sup>6</sup>

And no concealing wrongful acts:  
 Those she abandons—six root deeds.  
 No taking hold of things of gold,  
 Nor shaving of the private parts.  
 No food not given or received,  
 Nor eating any hoarded up.  
 No voiding filth upon green grass,  
 Nor digging in the earth. Those she  
 Abandons—six concordant deeds.

Gelongmas keep from eight defeats,  
 Remainders twenty, downfalls that  
 Require forfeit thirty-three,  
 A hundred eighty simple ones,  
 Eleven to be confessed, twelve and  
 A hundred in the misdeed class,  
 Three hundred sixty-four in all.

gelongma

A gelong keeps from four defeats,  
 Thirteen remainders, thirty of  
 The downfalls with a forfeiture  
 And ninety of the simple ones.  
 With four to be confessed, twelve and  
 A hundred in the misdeed class,  
 Two hundred fifty-three in sum.

gelong

These eight types thus of *prātimokṣha*  
 Arise with man or woman as base—  
 Those of three continents, not in  
 Unpleasant Sound, the impotent,  
 The neuter or hermaphrodite.

base where produced<sup>7</sup>

The cause to lose the vows has two:  
 Give back the training, die, both signs,  
 Change thrice and roots of virtue cut  
 Are common ones. To learn one was

cause of loss<sup>8</sup>

Not twenty then, agree to serve,  
The day gone by, specific ones,  
In order, for a gelong or  
Gelobma or the one-day fast.  
Some also claim the vows are lost  
Through a root downfall or else when  
The holy Dharma is no more.  
Kashmir *Vaibhāṣikas* say one  
Ordained but with a root default  
Is like a rich man with a debt.

By keeping well these vows you win	benefit
Divine and human temporary fruits	
And then the ultimate of fruits,	
The three awakenings, it is taught.	
So, keen ones, keep the <i>prātimokṣha</i>	
At all times, with respect, with zeal.	

Embodied ones, this virtue guide	dedication
All births in pure ways to abide.	

This, the *Condensed Essence of the Ocean of the Vinaya Determining the Individual Liberation Vows*, was composed by the poet born at the edge of the Land of Snows, the easterner Tsongkhapa, Venerable Lobsang Dragpa.

## Notes

1. In the most familiar Tibetan interpretation the Sanskrit word *prātimokṣa* is taken to mean individual liberation, *so sor thar pa*. The person keeping these vows individually becomes liberated from cyclic existence; other beings do not become liberated. Hence these vows are the individual liberation vows.

2. ‘Harming others’ refers to the three physical and four verbal non-virtuous actions, ‘its base’ to the three mental non-virtues which motivate those seven.

According to the Great Exposition School (*Vaibhāṣika*, *byed brag smra ba*) and our own system, that of the Consequence School (*Prāsaṅgika*, *thal 'gyur pa*), the entity of the vows is form. The other schools understand their entity as either consciousness (‘the intent to abandon’) or a non-associated compounded phenomena (‘its seed’), depending whether the intent is manifest at a particular time or not. Our own system, however, says that when one takes the vows they arise as a subtle physical entity within the body that remains there until death or until the vows are otherwise lost or given up. They are a type of form which only appears to a mental consciousness, not to any of the five sense consciousnesses. They are thus phenomenon-source, *chos kyi skye mched*.

3. The eight types of individual liberation vow in Sanskrit and Tibetan:

1. One-day fast: *upavāsa*, *bsnyen gnas*, in Tibetan, literally **abiding close** to virtue
2. Layman: *upāsaka*, *dge bsnyen*, **close to the virtue** of nirvana
3. Laywoman: *upāsikā*, *dge bsnyen ma*
4. Getsul: *śrāmanera*, *dge tshul*, enterer into the **way/path to the virtue** of nirvana
5. Getsulma (female equivalent of 4): *śrāmanerikā*, *dge tshul ma*
6. Gelobma: *śikṣamāṇā*, *dge slob ma*, **trainee in virtue** (by way of the twelve abandonments)
7. Gelong: *bhikṣu*, *dge slong*, **seeker of virtue**
8. Gelongma (female equivalent of 7): *bhikṣuṇī*, *dge slong ma*

4. ‘And suchlike’ in the phrase ‘dance, garlands and suchlike’ refers to both dance and garlands individually. ‘Dance and suchlike’ includes dancing, singing and making music. ‘Garlands and suchlike’ includes attaching garlands to the head and so forth, applying scent, wearing ornaments and using cosmetics.

5. Of the various explanations of the six types of lay follower’s vows, that of Ngulchu Dharmabhadra agrees best with Tsongkhapa’s presentation. See his *Sun Illuminating the Thought of the Gentle-Minded, Commentary to the ‘Essence of the Vinaya Ocean,’* pp. 11-12.

All holders of lay follower vows undertake the trainings of going for refuge and abandoning alcohol. On top of that, ‘the one’ undertakes to abandon one of the root four, killing and so forth, ‘some’ undertakes to abandon two

and 'most' undertakes to abandon three. 'All' undertakes to abandon all four, but restraining from 'wrong desire,' i.e., sex with an improper as opposed to a proper partner and so forth, in contrast to 'chastity' who maintains complete celibacy. 'Refuge,' the sixth, is the one who makes the minimum commitments though, in Dharmabhadra's interpretation, he or she abandons alcohol as well as abiding by the refuge precepts.

6. Another version of the gelobma vows has 'No cutting of green herbage too' instead of 'No voiding filth upon green grass.'

7. In the traditional, originally Indian, cosmology current in Tsongkhapa's day four continents surround Mount Meru. All are inhabited by humans. They are Excellent Body, then the continent where most readers live, Rose-apple Continent, plus Cattle Enjoyment and finally Unpleasant Sound. The people of Unpleasant Sound live in comfort and are too dull to be able to generate the mind wishing to forsake the world. *Zambuling* ('dzam bu gling), the Tibetan for Rose-apple Continent, is now usually taken to mean this earth.

8. One's roots of virtue are cut when one generates wrong view, that is, the wrong view specified in the ten non-virtuous actions, rejecting karma, past and future lives, the Three Jewels.

'Agree to serve', i.e., agree to serve a man sexually.



# **The Namtse Dengma Getsul Training**



## Translator's Introduction

Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) strove to purify and revitalize the practice of vinaya as he found it in Tibet. As part of his efforts, at the age of forty-six he passed a rains retreat at the monastery of Namtse Deng. There, in the company of six hundred sangha, he and two other Dharma masters, the great Rendawa and the translator Kyabchog Palsang, made a thorough survey of the vinaya to illuminate correct practice and expose mistaken views. Tsongkhapa's close disciple Gyaltsab-je, from among the extensive teachings, made a written record of Tsongkhapa's analysis of the getsul's training.

In the traditional manner Tsongkhapa shows how the getsul's training derives from the gelong's. The getsul is the novice while the gelong is fully ordained, so the getsul's training is a modification, a slighter version of the gelong's discipline.

The pledges that the candidate for getsul ordination makes to avoid the three lapses and then the vows he or she takes with an action of body and speech in the presence of his or her preceptor are specifically the antidote to thirty-six transgressions. These Tsongkhapa explains on the basis of the summary verses found in the getsul sojong.<sup>1</sup> These verses give, in chantable form, a catchword to remember each training rule by. The majority of these thirty-six explicit training rules are directly similar to one or other of a male gelong's 253 vows or a female gelong's 364.

Next Tsongkhapa enumerates those of a male gelong's infractions which are not faults for a male getsul (getsulpa). The slight differences in the list of non-infractions for a female getsul (getsulma) are shown in a note. Then Tsongkhapa mentions the further group of faults which a getsul must avoid, the misdeeds which are restraints. For a getsulpa these include the associated misdeeds, all those actions that are contrary to the gelongpa's 253 vows other than those already covered in the list of the thirty-six transgressions and those included in the

list of non-infractions; for a getsulma, likewise with those actions which are faults for a gelongma.

Tsongkhapa shows in his final paragraph how those of the main thirty-six transgressions which do not directly correlate with a specific gelongpa's vow may nevertheless be indirectly derived from the gelongpa's precepts. The different correspondences between the thirty-six transgressions and the gelongma vows are identified in the notes.

### **Verses Summarizing the Getsul Precepts, from Sojong**

The four on taking life and theft,  
Unchastity and lying speech  
And baseless, vague and sangha schism,  
Take sides, subvert the lay folk, lie,  
Show favour, denigrate, slight food,  
Accuse of a remainder and  
Reject the training, hide with rice,  
Strong drink and song, dance, music make  
And ornaments, cosmetics, scent,  
Plus garlands, beds, seats, great or high,  
Food after noon, take silver, gold  
And then three types of lapses too:  
Thereby transgressions thirty-six.<sup>2</sup>

# **The Namtse Dengma Getsul Training**

I bow down to the Omniscient One.

## **Introduction**

All a gelong's five classes of infractions are in three categories for a getsul, in that some are faults which are transgressions, some are associated faults and some are not infractions. Faults which are transgressions are thirty-six in number.

### **A. Faults which are transgressions**

#### **The four on taking life (1-4)**

1. The misdeed which is similar to the defeat of homicide

Here there are the four factors of basis, thought, action and completion.

- a. Basis

Here there are two, base and object. The base is one whose getsul training is pure or at least restorable, is in his or her right mind, and is not a getsul prior to this training rule being prescribed.<sup>3</sup> The object is a human being or a forming human being.<sup>4</sup>

- b. Thought

Here there are two, discrimination and motivation. The discrimination: you discriminate that which is a human being to be that, or you suspect that it is. The motivation is an uninterrupted wish to kill that.

- c. Action

You, personally or by delegating someone, start killing that, by whatever means, poison, a weapon and so forth.

d. Completion

When the life-force ceases, a misdeed similar to the defeat of homicide.

Briefly, except for misdeeds similar to the defeat of homicide, all faults of body or speech which are motivated by the wish to kill a human being, or by the wish to kill a non-human being other than an animal, are misdeeds to be confessed that are included in that category.<sup>5</sup>

2. The misdeed to be confessed of pouring out<sup>6</sup> that which contains animals

a. Basis

Of the two, the base is as above and the object is living creatures included in the animal birth level, visible to the ordinary eye, together with their support.

b. Thought

Of the two, the discrimination: you discriminate that which contains living creatures as containing them, or you suspect that it does. The motivation: an uninterrupted wish [to utilize], discriminating that it is for the sake of others.

c. Action

You, personally or by delegating someone, start utilizing that which contains living creatures, for the sake of others.

d. Completion

You incur as many misdeeds to be confessed as living creatures die.

3. The misdeed to be confessed of using that which contains animals

The basis factors and so on are as above. The motivation is a wish to use it for your own sake alone and the action is that you, personally, or by delegating someone, start using it for

your own sake alone.

4. The misdeed to be confessed of killing an animal

Of the four:

a. Basis

The base is as before. The object is a living creature at the animal birth level without support.

b. Thought

The discrimination: you discriminate that which is an animal to be that, or you suspect that it is. The motivation is an uninterrupted wish to kill that.

c. Action

You, personally or by delegating someone, start killing by whatever means, a weapon and so forth.

d. Completion

When the life-force ceases.

5. **And theft**

Of the four:

a. Basis

The base is as before. The object from whom you steal is a human being whose property is separate from your own. The thing you steal, in that time and place, in one action, is of significant value<sup>7</sup> both to the one stolen from and the stealer. The person feels a sense of possessiveness towards it and it does belong to him or her. Being neither cooked food nor some charnel-ground thing an executioner and so forth chances upon and takes possession of, it is not a mean item.

b. Thought

The general and the specific discrimination are non-mistaken.<sup>8</sup> The motivation is an uninterrupted wish to permanently separate someone from something for

your own welfare, although it is the other person's and he or she is not giving it away.

c. Action

You, personally or by delegating someone, start stealing it.

c. Completion

When you think, 'I have obtained it.'

Except for misdeeds similar to the defeat of theft, all faults of body or speech which are motivated by the mind of stealing are ones to be confessed which are included in that category.

6. **Unchastity**

a. Basis

Of the two, the base which endeavours is your 'jewel' (i.e., male member). It is connected with your continuum, functionable and free from disease.<sup>9</sup> With regard to the object of endeavour, there are two, the three passages and the body where they are present. The three passages are the mouth, anus and female 'defiler' (i.e., sex organ)<sup>10</sup> from the surface of the first part onwards, undeteriorated by disease and so forth. The body where they are present is either a complete body or the complete upper or lower half of a body, sexually serviceable, the living or dead body of a human or non-human being, man's, woman's, neuter's, your own body or the body of another, of which, whichever orifice it is, it is alike in being 'similar to a defeat.'

b. Thought

Of the two, the discrimination is mistaken or non-mistaken alike.<sup>11</sup> The motivation is an uninterrupted wish for the gratification of the physical sensation of contact between passage and portion of member.



c. Action

You start in accordance with your intention.

d. Completion

When you experience the physical sensation of engagement with your tactile consciousness and you are mentally gratified, a misdeed similar to the defeat of unchastity.

Except for misdeeds similar to the defeat of unchastity, all faults of body and speech motivated by the wish to speak about unchastity or the wish to go along with another's speech are ones to be confessed which are included in that category.

**7. And lying speech**

Of the four:

a. Basis

Three factors: the base who speaks is as before. The object to whom you speak has seven qualities: the five attributes of [1] being human, [2] being able to speak, [3] being able to understand meaning, [4] being in his or her right mind, and [5] being neither a neuter nor a hermaphrodite; plus [6] being in his or her ordinary form and [7] being a different continuum to you. That about which you speak is a higher, human state, i.e., any of the good qualities that are classified as being beyond the Desire Realm, from the first meditative stabilization up to the Buddha ground, whether worldly or beyond the world.

b. Thought

Of the two, the general and the specific discrimination are non-mistaken and the motivation is the uninterrupted wish to verbally and deceptively claim a higher, human state or the wish to go along with another's spoken claim [on your behalf].

c. Action

In speech possessing five characteristics, i.e., [1] it is speech, [2] it is your own, [3] it relates to yourself, [4] you speak non-mistakenly and [5] you speak clearly, you start to claim that you have attained a higher, human state [or] you start to go along with another's statement claiming it.<sup>12</sup>

d. Completion

When the meaning is understood, a misdeed similar to the defeat of lying speech.

Except for misdeeds which are similar to the defeat of lying speech, all faults of body or speech which are motivated by a wish to deceptively claim a higher, human state, or by a wish to go along with another's claim, are ones to be confessed which are included in that category.

**Note on the Meaning of 'Misdeed Similar to a Defeat':**

The meaning of 'misdeeds similar to a defeat' is that the four of them are misdeeds and, because they are similar to a *gelong's* four defeats in function, they are called similar to a defeat.<sup>13</sup> How are they similar in function? If a *gelong* incurs any of the four defeats with concealment, restoration is not possible, so then in this life none of the individual liberation vows will generate in his continuum. If he does not conceal his defeat even for a moment, he undergoes punishment-training in the *sangha* to purify the defeat. If he does not attain *foe destroyerhood*, by following the punishment-training properly for the rest of his life, his defeat is purified, it is said.

Likewise for a *getsul* also: if you incur [any of] the four similar to a defeat with concealment, restoration is not possible. If it is without concealment, you undergo the punishment-training. You are suitable only to be a 'given the training' *getsul* who has to take his or her punishment properly.<sup>14</sup> And thus it says in [Shākyaprabha's] *Three Hundred*.<sup>15</sup>

As a gelong, so a getsul too,  
No chance then to generate a vow.

**8. And baseless**

When you, wishing for [that person's] degeneration, although you know or suppose it has no basis in what you have seen, heard or suspect, deceivingly wish to make, or make, a clearly spoken false accusation which joins the doer to the deed, saying, 'This gelong has engaged in unchaste behaviour,' and so forth, a misdeed to be confessed.<sup>16</sup>

**9. Vague**

When you, wishing for [that person's] degeneration, although you know or suppose it has no basis in what you have seen, heard, or suspect, deceivingly wish to make, or, so motivated make, a clearly spoken false accusation which does not join the doer to the deed, saying, 'I saw Gelong (name). I saw unchaste behaviour,' and so forth.

**10. And sangha schism**

When you, intentionally deceiving, wish to split off, or split off a sangha or person(s),<sup>17</sup> in favour of another teacher or a path other than the three trainings and their adjuncts.

**11. Take sides**

When you, deceivingly, wish to help, or help, the schism.

**12. Subvert the lay folk**

When you act to subvert the minds of lay folk by engaging in faults in places where lay folk live, drinking intoxicants and so forth, or discussing the faults of your companions in front of them; and when the sangha, acting in accordance with the Dharma, impose the discipline of banishment, you, intentionally deceiving, wish to say, or say, 'These sangha who have improperly imposed the discipline of banishment on me are just following their whims,' and so forth.

### 13. **Intentional**<sup>18</sup>

When you wish to speak, or speak, deceptively, other than with [any of the following intentions:] the wish to claim higher, human Dharmas; the wish to make a false accusation; the wishes included within schism-making; the wish to denigrate a steward and so forth; the wish to reject your training, correctly set forth; and, although you have obtained food or drink already, in order to receive more of something particular, the wish to hide.

### 14. **Show favour**

When, regarding an acquisition, such as cloth and so forth that has been properly directed to somebody, sangha and so forth, you, intentionally deceiving, wish to say, or say, 'It has been improperly directed.'

### 15. **Denigrate**

When, regarding the food, drink, bedding, dwelling place and so forth the steward and so forth has appropriately and properly allotted you, you, intentionally deceiving, wish to speak, or speak denigratingly of the steward and so forth, saying, 'This person has improperly, evilly, allotted me a dwelling place,' and so forth.

### 16. **Slight food**

When, although you know, or suspect, the other party, a Dharma teacher, does not teach the Dharma merely for slight material things, food and drink or whatever, you, deceptively, wish to make, or make, a spoken false accusation, saying, 'This person teaches the Dharma merely for slight material things, food and drink and so forth.'

### 17. **Accuse of a remainder**

When you, wishing for [that person's] degeneration, knowing or supposing it has no basis in what you have seen, or heard, or suspect, deceptively wish to make, or make, a

clearly or unclearly spoken false accusation, which does or does not join the doer to the deed, against this gelong and so forth, of any infraction in the sangha remainder class or a lesser one.

**18. And reject the training**

When a gelong and so forth advises you to train in the training of abandoning food at the wrong time and so forth, although you have belief in his words, deceivingly, you wish to reject, or, in speech so motivated, you reject the person who has correctly set forth your training, saying, 'You are no expert (and so forth). Therefore, having no belief in your words, for now, until I question an expert, I will not train.'

**19. Hide with rice**

When, although you have obtained food and drink already, in order to receive more of something particular, you wish to hide or hide what you have already obtained with some other food and so forth, so that the other person thinks you have not obtained any.

**20. Strong drink**

With the wish to consume intoxicants<sup>19</sup> such as grain beer with a ferment added, or alcoholic drinks made without one added such as wine and so forth, you enjoy intoxicants, one for every swallow.

**21. And song**

When, with the wish to sing due to a mind of abandonment or attachment and so forth, you merely clear your throat.

**22. Dance**

When, with the wish to dance due to a mind of abandonment or attachment and so forth, you merely twitch an eyebrow.

### 23. **Music make**

When, out of a mind of abandonment or excitement and so forth, you needlessly make musical sounds with a drum and the like. If, in order to do it as an offering to the Buddhas, you say, 'People, let's make an offering to the Teacher,' then there is no fault, because it is an offering. But if you say, 'Let's make music and sing,' then it is a fault.

### 24. **And ornaments**

When you needlessly and frivolously adorn yourself with earrings, finger rings and so forth.

### 25. **Cosmetics**

When you needlessly and frivolously put cosmetics, colouring like vermilion and so forth, on the lips and face, and wear them.

### 26. **Scent**

When you needlessly and frivolously apply scents like sandalwood and so forth to the body, and experience the tactile sensation.<sup>20</sup>

### 27. **Plus garlands**

When you needlessly and frivolously fasten decorative garlands of flowers and so forth to the head or wherever.

### 28-31. **Beds, seats, great or high**

With regard to great beds and seats there are two: when you needlessly and frivolously sit or lie on a costly bed adorned with precious substances such as ivory, gold, silver, and so forth, whether it is a high or low one. Likewise when you sit or lie on such a seat.<sup>21</sup>

With regard to high beds or seats there are two: when you needlessly and frivolously sit or lie on such as a wooden bed more than one cubit<sup>22</sup> [in height]. When you sit on or lie on any seat more than a cubit [in height].

### 32. Food after noon

Although you discriminate or suspect the wrong time to be the wrong time—the wrong time being from half the day having passed until the first moment of the first part of dawn in the place where you are staying—and although you are not in the situation of having permission through being ill and so forth, with the wish to partake of suitable for the morning-time food or drink, apricots, walnuts and so forth, you partake; one for each mouthful.

When, although you discriminate or suspect the right time to be the wrong time, yet you partake, it is the same as above. When you discriminate the right time to be the right time, or the wrong time to be the right time and partake, then there is no fault.<sup>23</sup> Thus there are six possible ways of discriminating, four ways in which a fault occurs and two where there is no fault. One of these, whichever is the case, will apply in all infractions which arise mainly through discrimination, unchastity being the exception.<sup>24</sup>

### 33. Take silver, gold

When, with regard to a precious thing in your possession, like gold or silver, instead of holding to the mind that it is in itself unsuitable, with a mind that it is in itself wealth [you think], 'It is mine.'

### 34-36. And then three types of lapses too

Firstly, when you do things such as needlessly wearing and keeping clothing with fringes and fronds untrimmed,<sup>25</sup> or that is white in colour and so forth—signs specific to lay people—it is a lapse from abandoning the signs of a lay person. When you are a dweller in the wild you are permitted to let your head or facial hair be up to two finger-widths only. When you dwell near a town or village, the limit is one-and-a-half finger-widths only. If you let it be more than half a finger-width over these two limits, for every measure over, one to be confessed.

Secondly, if you do not have a chögö or a shamtab<sup>26</sup> and so forth, the signs of a goneforther, then you should acquire them. When although you are able to acquire them yet you do not, or you do not wear them and so forth, or when you do things such as taking a pledge of nudity, or needlessly keeping and wearing clothes made of hair or clothes made of owl feathers and so forth—uncommon signs specific to Forders<sup>27</sup>—it is a lapse from assuming the signs of a goneforther.

Thirdly, when you do things such as not respecting your preceptor, or, mentally deprecating him, you do not hold him as your preceptor, or, although you are able to fulfil his Dharma instructions yet you do not, it is a lapse from applying to your preceptor, a misdeed to be confessed.

Also, when you go against the general instructions on going for refuge, such as to make offerings to the supreme Jewels and so forth, or against the specific instructions, such as, having gone for refuge to Buddha, not to hold any other worldly gods such as Ishvara as your refuge and so forth, it is a misdeed to be confessed.

Just as we have mostly inserted above, some affirm that merely mentally acquiescing when the motivation to commit a transgression arises, even if it has no outcome in terms of body or speech, is to be confessed. Such is clearly the thought of [Guṇaprabha's] *Aphorisms on Vinaya*<sup>28</sup> which says, 'So also are transgressions by those not fully ordained and gone forth [misdeeds],' and of [Dharmamitra's] *Extensive Commentary*<sup>29</sup> to it which indicates that, except for those which are similar to a defeat, all faults of transgression for a getsul are ones to be confessed. Also [Shākyaprabha's] assertion in the *Three Hundred* and in his own commentary on it, the *Luminous*,<sup>30</sup> that the arising of the motivation, without any outcome in terms of body or speech, is a restraint, appears to be somewhat similar.<sup>31</sup>



## B. Non-infractions

Retain, be separate, dig the earth  
And touch a precious thing, touch fire,  
Eat food after abandoning  
And food not given or received,  
Eat food that has been hoarded up  
And climb a tree and cut a tree  
And void filth on green herbage too  
And then destroy a seed as well,  
Plus basis of the training here.  
Put by, be separate in the wild,  
Hoard up, sleep with a getsul there,  
Leave not informing, these eighteen.

From the forfeiting downfall of retaining cloth for ten days up to leaving the site of a procedure without informing anyone, seventeen and a half non-infractions are indicated. The half: you have to refrain from the fault of more than [two] nights with a lay person, but [same-sex] getsuls do not need to refrain from this between themselves, so it counts as a half. ‘Retain’ indicates that neither the forfeiting downfall of retaining cloth nor retaining an alms bowl for ten days is a fault. ‘Basis of the training’ [i.e., precept or training rule] marks the ends [of each of the preceding shorthand names in the verses. In English it goes better at the beginning of the names:] the basis of training of retaining, the basis of training of being separate and the rest. It does not indicate a non-infraction on its own. ‘Dig the earth’ and so on, the others, each indicate one non-infraction each.<sup>32</sup> These verses summarizing the non-infractions up to ‘Plus basis of the training here’ are from [Upagupta et al’s] *Great Exposition of Particulars*<sup>33</sup> as quoted in the *Luminous*.

## C. Misdeeds which are restraints

Then two hundred twelve are left  
All misdeeds which are restraints.<sup>34</sup>

From among the infractions which are explicitly covered by the 253 vows, after the getsul's transgressions and non-infractions are done with, all the 212 which remain, from emission up to not voiding phlegm and so forth in water,<sup>35</sup> plus all the faults for a gelong which are covered in the seventeen bases,<sup>36</sup> except for some few faults such as not having a namjar<sup>37</sup> and going to a dwelling place where Forders are in residence, are restraints for a getsul.<sup>38</sup>

## Final Points

The seven from 'song, dance' up to 'garlands' are misdeeds against the training which are included in the downfall of being included in the bases for vanity.<sup>39</sup> The four faults of sitting on beds, seats, great or high are included within the downfall of fabricating bed legs. Apart from the fault of wearing white clothing, the faults of lapsing from abandoning the signs of a lay person and of the other two lapses are faults at the time of the basis;<sup>40</sup> they are not counted amongst any of the infractions which are covered in the 253 vows.<sup>41</sup> The two non-infractions of cutting a tree and destroying seeds are both counted as one infraction [for the fully ordained], one that is explicitly covered in the gelong vows.

Noted down from the Master's instructions by Gyaltsab Rinpoche.

By virtue of recording this advice,  
All wandering beings, with morals of the best,  
On legs of effortless perseverance  
Achieve the state of full Omniscience!

## Notes

1. Sojong (Sanskrit: *poṣadha*) is the fortnightly ceremony concerned with restoring and purifying the monastic vows.
2. *The Rites of the Three Bases, The Trainings of the Three Vows, Six Sessions and The Namtse Dengma Getsul Training, gzhi gsum gyi cho ga dang sdom gsum bslab bya thun drug dge tshul gyi bslab bya rnam rtse ldeng ma bcas*, p. 21.
3. The first monk to commit homicide, however reprehensible his conduct and however much against conduct expected of the sangha, was not breaking any explicit precept. The rule against homicide was only formulated afterwards in response to his action. Buddha framed all the other training rules in the same way, as and when the occasion arose, so there too the first doer of the subsequently proscribed deed is not the 'base' who is in breach of the precept.
4. A human being is forming from conception up to the end of the eighteenth week of pregnancy and is formed thereafter, since all the sense faculties should have arisen by then. In this sense a forming human being is a human being.
5. The four root negative actions, complete in all factors, are for a getsul misdeeds similar to a defeat. See Tsongkhapa's explanation of this class of infractions below. An incomplete infraction of one of the four roots, such as when you attempt to kill a person but only succeed in wounding them, is like an infraction of one of the other thirty-two training rules in that you can restore and purify the precept through confession in the proper manner. Hence offences of this type are known as 'misdeeds to be confessed.'
6. In some editions *brdeg pa*, 'strike,' is found instead of '*debs pa*. The latter I have translated here in the name of the vow as 'pour out.' My translation of '*debs pa* in this way follows the way the word is used in the *Individual Liberation Sutra* (f. 12a6), the original exposition of the gelong's vows. In the sutra the offending gelong is described as pouring out water containing bugs on to grass, soil or dung without thought for the creatures living in the water. The rule as it is found in more extensive presentations generalizes to prohibit the heedless use of other materials besides water that contain living creatures, such as dead wood or earth. These substances are the 'support' of the living creatures. Since Tsongkhapa nowhere in his explanation of the vow restricts the 'support' he is talking about to water or liquids alone, in the body of the vow I have translated '*debs pa* in a more general sense, as utilize.
7. Of significant value. First alternative: having a value such that the judicial authorities would castigate the one stealing it as a thief and he or she would deserve to be punished under the law of the land. Second alternative: having a value of not less than five *masakas*, a unit of money used in the

Buddha's time. Many later masters have tried to determine what five *masakas* would have been worth in their own day but there is no reliable consensus to report.

8. Mistaken general discrimination: for example, you steal something that belongs to a human being thinking it belongs to some other kind of sentient being. Mistaken specific discrimination: for example, you steal something belonging to Tashi, thinking it belongs to Tenzin. Though you incur an infraction in either case, neither is the actual full misdeed similar to the defeat of theft since the discrimination factor is not fulfilled.

9. That is, not affected by a disease which causes the loss of sensation.

10. The author's use of the terms 'jewel' and 'defiler' in this context may perhaps be explained by the fact that he was writing for a male audience. The term 'defiler' is equally used for the male organ in the vinaya literature.

11. If one's encounter is with the person Tashi, for instance, the offence is equally heavy whether one correctly thinks that that person is Tashi or one mistakenly thinks that he or she is someone else.

12. That is, to incur the actual misdeed similar to the defeat, you must talk, not write or merely gesture, about your own, spurious, attainment, not tripping over your tongue and saying something you did not mean to say, and you must make an explicit claim, not just an insinuation, or you verbally assent to someone else's claim on your behalf.

13. In contrast to the gelongpa's four the gelongma has eight defeats to refrain from but male and female getsuls alike have only the four misdeeds similar to a defeat to avoid.

14. The punishment-training: the gelong or getsul, stripped of his or her privileges, performs menial tasks and occupies the lowest place in the rank of seniority.

15. Śākyaprabha (sha'kya 'od), *Getsul Stanzas of the Superiors Who Propound the Existence of All Bases/The Three Hundred*, *Mūlasarvāstivādiśrāmaṇerakārikā*, 'phags pa gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba'i dge tshul gyi tshig le'ur byas pa/gsum brgya pa. This quotation is found in Śākyaprabha's autocommentary to his *Three Hundred* verses, the *Luminous Commentary on the Getsul Stanzas of the Superiors Who Propound the Existence of All Bases*, *Mūlasarvāstivādiśrāmaṇerakārikāvṛttiṇi* *abhāvati*, 'phags pa gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba'i dge tshul gyi tshig le'ur byas pa'i 'grel ba 'od ldan, f. 81b4. However, rather than being a quotation from the *Three Hundred* itself, it appears to be a quotation from the *Great Exposition of Particulars/Ocean [or Treasury] of Great Exposition*, *Mahāvibhāṣā*, *bye brag tu bshad pa chen po/bye brag bshad mtsho [or mdzod] chen mo* by Upagupta et al.

16. This infraction and the next consist of falsely accusing someone at the gelong level of ordination of a defeat. No.17, accuse of a remainder, deals with false accusations of lesser infractions.

17. A sangha contains a minimum of four gelongs, so ‘person(s)’ refers to fewer than that.

18. Tsongkhapa in his text says *shes bzhin*, intentional, i.e., knowing or intentional lie here. In the sojong text in common use in the Gelug tradition in the present day, here it says *brzun*, meaning lie, hence ‘lie’ is used in the English translation of the sojong summary verses quoted before the main text. (See p. 18.)

19. Tsongkhapa uses the word *myos pa gyur ba* here which clearly includes intoxicants other than alcohol as well.

20. Experience the tactile sensation. Being mostly oil-based, traditional Indian perfumes when rubbed on will make the skin feel supple, and different oils may have a warming or cooling effect, for instance.

21. Speculatively amending the text by omitting *khru gang las lhagpa*. This phrase is found in all editions of the text consulted but nothing in Śākyaprabha’s *Luminous* or any other source suggests the inclusion of it is anything but a misprint. Śākyaprabha says, ‘A high bed is one more than a cubit [in height]. A great bed is one with legs of gold or ivory and so forth and adorned with precious things.’ (f. 139b2)

22. The length of one’s forearm.

23. ‘Right time’ and ‘wrong time’ refer to the time when it is appropriate to consume ‘suitable for the morning-time food and drink’ *dus su rung ba’i bza btung*, literally, suitable for the time food and drink: **suitable**, i.e., permitted, **for** an ordained person to consume during **the morning-time** only **food and drink**. This category comprises nourishment prepared from flour, seeds, grains, fruit, vegetables, milk, curd and so forth, with certain exceptions.

24. All a getsul’s misdeeds except the one mentioned are infractions which arise mainly from discrimination, i.e., depend on what your understanding is at the time. It is an infraction to lie on an ornate, expensive bed but, if you do so unknowingly in the dark, believing it to be an ordinary bed, then you do not incur the infraction. If you eat in the afternoon believing it to be still before noon, there is no fault, and so forth. There are no allowances for mistaken discrimination in the case of unchaste behaviour.

25. Fringes, *kha tshar*: the threads of the warp left fringing the ends of a woven cloth after it is cut from the loom. Fronds, *phun tshar*: excess threads of the weft left hanging during the weaving of a cloth.

26. Chögö: the upper, yellow, patched robe. Shamtab: the lower robe.
27. Forder, *tīrthika*, is a name for a follower of one of the non-Buddhist Indian schools, who propose their own fords to the further shore of liberation.
28. Guṇaprabha (yon tan 'od), *Vinayasūtra*, 'dul ba'i mdo/'dul ba'i mdo rtsa ba, ff. 54b7-55a1. For Tibetan students, this is the preferred condensed Indian vinaya commentary.
29. Dharmamitra (chos kyi bshes gnyen), *Extensive Commentary on the Aphorisms on Vinaya*, *Vinayasūtratīkā*, 'dul ba'i mdo'i rgya cher 'grel ba. This is the Indian exposition of the *Aphorisms on Vinaya* most popular in the Tibetan tradition. See, for instance, Dharmamitra's comment at vol. yu, f. 66a6-7.
30. In the *Luminous* see for instance Śākyaprabha's statement at f. 96a7-96b1. This line does not occur in the Peking edition of the *Tengyur*, though the root verse it refers to is there.
31. The import of the three quotations in this paragraph is as follows: a fully ordained monk or nun's wrong actions in breach of his or her vows are classified in five different categories according to the seriousness of the fault (see *Essence of the Vinaya Ocean*, p. 11) and within each class of fault there are further gradations of seriousness depending on whether there was just the unfulfilled mental intention, some incomplete verbal or physical activity, or else the complete breakage of a vow. Restoration and purification procedures, if applicable, then vary according to the seriousness of the offence.
- For getsuls, getsulmas and gelobmas, or as Guṇaprabha calls them, 'those not fully ordained and gone forth,' all breaches of their explicit training rules, i.e., their transgressions, are the same in being misdeeds. (For gelongs and gelongmas misdeeds are the least serious of their five classes of infraction.) Tsongkhapa follows Dharmamitra in saying that, except for complete breakages of the four root vows, all these transgressions are ones to be confessed. Śākyaprabha is similar in seeing a getsul's mentally consenting to his or her own wish to commit a transgression as a fault to be purified. He differs in classifying it as a misdeed to restrain oneself from rather than as a misdeed to be confessed. (For more on misdeeds to restrain oneself from, see note 38.)
32. Of the 253 infractions spelled out in the gelongpa vows, eighteen (seventeen and a half) are not infractions for a getsulpa. Of the 364 infractions spelled out in the gelongma vows twenty-one (twenty and a half) are not infractions for a getsulma. For the getsulma's non-infractions, from the list of eighteen infractions for a getsulpa above, strike out being separate in the wild and add the following four:
18. Not blessing her chögö on the first day
  19. Not blessing her chögö every half month
  20. Not giving full ordination to [a gelobma] trained in the training [for two years]

## 21. Cooking raw food.

33. *Great Exposition of Particulars*. This ancient exposition reckoned the non-infractions for a getsul as thirteen and summarized them in the verses ending at 'Plus bases of the training here.' The five (four and a half) non-infractions listed after that were identified by later scholars who, however, preserved the *Great Exposition* summary verses as originally composed, just adding three more lines.

34. Possibly Tsongkhapa is quoting from another text here but which text has not been identified.

35. By subtracting from 253 the number of the getsulpa's transgressions which are explicitly covered in the gelongpa vows and the number of non-infractions for getsulpas just calculated above, Tsongkhapa arrives at the figure of 212. These are a male getsul's associated misdeeds (*phyogs mthun nyes byas*). This figure of 212 appears in all editions of Tsongkhapa's text seen. However, others calculate the figure in a slightly different way. For instance, Geshe Losang Tsering (dge bshes blo bzang tshe ring) in his *Vinaya Verse Synopsis*, p. 166, gives a figure of 214%. Computing the corresponding number of associated faults for a female getsul would involve still more debate so I do not attempt it here.

'Misdeeds which are restraints' (*bsdam bya'i nyes chas*) is thus a larger category than 'associated misdeeds.' Besides the associated misdeeds it includes the faults Tsongkhapa goes on to mention.

36. The original vinaya expositions in the *Kangyur* divide the vinaya into seventeen bases, i.e., topics. They explicate the main precepts of those fully ordained as set forth in the two *Individual Liberation Sūtras*, male and female, and the precepts for those not fully ordained. As well, they detail various additional points of training. Breaches of these latter are the 'faults... covered in the seventeen bases.'

37. At the gelong level of ordination, the second, outer, of the two yellow, patched upper robes.

38. We saw that a getsul's most serious transgressions are the misdeeds similar to a defeat. Tsongkhapa explained what follows from incurring one of these on p. 24. Incomplete breakages of the four root vows and complete or incomplete breakages of the other thirty-two of the thirty-six transgressions are all misdeeds to be confessed. The last category of faults a getsul refrains from are the misdeeds which are restraints. To make amends for one of these misdeeds it is enough, having mentally acknowledged and regretted it, to privately resolve to restrain from the fault in the future. (Confession to another is not required.) Hence they are misdeeds to restrain oneself from or 'misdeeds which are restraints.'

39. None of the gelongpa's 253 training rules are the explicit antidote to any of the seven infractions Tsongkhapa is referring to here, so the gelong's obligation to refrain from these seven is included in his training in an indirect way as specified. A gelongma on the other hand, among her 364 training rules, has vows expressly restraining her from singing, from dancing, from making music, from wearing laywomen's ornaments and from rubbing on scents. Cosmetics for the face and flower garlands are not mentioned by name so these latter two are included in the gelongma's training indirectly.

40. These three are faults from the time of the basis, that is, the time when someone has gone forth but has not yet taken the vows that go with ordination.

41. A fully ordained nun has other vows also besides the one about avoiding wearing white clothing which relate to abandoning the signs of a lay person, e.g., the one against wearing laywomen's ornaments mentioned above in note 39.



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