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**Guided Contemplations for Everyday Life**

**Precious human rebirth**

Video 1:

⁃ 18 freedoms and advantages

Eight freedoms (Skt. aṣṭakṣaṇa; Tib. དལ་བ་བརྒྱད་, dalwa gyé, Wyl. dal ba brgyad) — Freedom from the eight states where there is no opportunity to practise the Dharma:

1. hells

2. preta realms

3. animals

4. long-living gods

5. uncivilized lands

6. incomplete faculties

7. with wrong views

8. a buddha has not come

Commentary

Chökyi Drakpa says:

"Firstly, if you were born in the hell, preta or animal realms, you would suffer from intense heat and cold, from hunger and thirst, or from enslavement, and it would be impossible for you to practise the Dharma. If you were born amongst the long-living gods, it would also be impossible because you would not have any thought of practicing the Dharma. The Buddha’s teachings are not found in uncivilized lands of the border regions, so living there is also an impossible state. Those with wrong views do not have any possibility of practicing the Dharma because their minds are contaminated by false beliefs, and they are just like Devadatta or Lekpé Karma. If you were born in a world where a buddha had not come, or during a dark kalpa, it would be impossible because even the words “Three Jewels” would be unknown. If you were born incapable of understanding, it would be impossible to practise the Dharma because you would not be able to understand the meaning of the teachings. When you have a physical body that is free from these 'eight states where there is no chance for Dharma practice', it is known as possessing a support for Dharma practice complete with the eight freedoms."

Video 2:

The five circumstantial advantages (Tib. གཞན་འབྱོར་ལྔ་, shyen jor nga, Wyl. gzhan 'byor lnga), half of the ten advantages of a precious human birth, are:

1. a buddha has come

2. he has taught the Dharma

3. the teachings have survived

4. there are followers of the teachings

5. there are favorable conditions for Dharma practice

Commentary

Chökyi Drakpa writes:

For the five advantages due to circumstances to be present, a buddha must have come into the world, an event as rare as the appearance of an Udumbara flower; he must have taught the three wheels of Dharma; and the teachings must have survived without fading. There must be extraordinary friends who have embraced the teachings; and a master or a spiritual friend must have accepted you. These five are known as 'the five advantages due to circumstances'.

The five personal advantages (Tib. རང་འབྱོར་ལྔ་, rang jor nga, Wyl. rang 'byor lnga), half of the ten advantages of a precious human birth, are:

1. being a human being

2. born in a central land

3. with faculties intact

4. lifestyle not harmful or wrong

5. with faith in the three pitakas

Commentary

Chökyi Drakpa says:

Being born as a human being means that you have a proper physical support for practicing the Dharma. Having all five faculties intact means you can study the teachings and contemplate them. In a central land means to be born in a place where the teachings are available. A lifestyle that is not harmful or wrong means that your body, speech and mind are in harmony with the Dharma. Having faith in Buddha’s teachings means recognizing that they provide a special path leading to freedom from samsara, and a state which surpasses the situation of the worldly gods. When you possess these five endowments, 'the five personal advantages' are said to be complete.

VIDEO 3:

**◦ Impermanence and death**

There are two kinds:

• the coarse impermanence of a given continuum (rags pa rgyun gyi mi rtag pa) and

• the subtle impermanence of momentary change (phra ba chos nyid kyi mi rtag pa).

Reflecting on Death and Impermanence

1) Death is Certain

a) Death can not be avoided

b) Life can not be extended; it is always diminishing

c) Even while we are alive there is little time for practice

Video 4:

2) The Time of Death is Uncertain

a) Our lifespan is not fixed

b) There are many causes of death, and few for sustaining life

c) The body is very fragile

3) At the Time of Death, only Dharma can help us

a) Our friends can not help us

b) Our resources can not help us

c) Our body can not help us

Video 5:

**◦ Infallibility of cause and effect, karma**

Tainted/Untainted

1. tainted actions

2. untainted actions

Meritorious/Non-meritorious/Non-transferrable

1. 'Meritorious actions' (Tib. བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ལས་, Wyl. bsod nams kyi las) are the positive actions that create pleasant experiences within the desire realms; or can lead to rebirth in higher states in samsaric existence.

2. 'Non-meritorious actions' (Tib. བསོད་ནམས་མིན་པའི་་ལས་, Wyl. bsod nams min pa'i las) are the negative actions that create painful experiences within the desire realms.

3. 'Non-transferrable actions' or ‘unwavering karma’ (Tib. མི་གཡོ་བའི་ལས་, Wyl. mi gyo ba'i las) refers to abiding in very subtle states of meditation that lead to rebirth in the two highest realms within samsara. It is so called since, apart from ripening in their respective realms―the form realm and formless realm― it does not transfer one to other realms as there’s no flexibility for it to ripen in any other way.

With meritorious and non-meritorious actions there’s some flexibility with how the karma can ripen. It can’t be said with certainty what the result will be.[2]

According to when the result is experienced

1. karma to be experienced in the present life (Tib. མཐོང་ཆོས་མྱོང་འགྱུར་གྱི་ལས་, thong chö nyong gyur kyi lé).

2. karma to be experienced after rebirth (Tib. སྐྱེ་ནས་མྱོང་འགྱུར་གྱི་ལས་, kyé né nyong gyur kyi lé)

3. karma to be experienced in other future lives (Tib. ལན་གྲངས་གཞན་ལ་མྱོང་འགྱུར་གྱི་ལས་, len drang shyen la nyong gyur kyi lé)

4. karma that is not certain to be experienced (Tib. མྱོང་བར་མ་ངེས་པའི་ལས་, nyongwar ma ngépé lé)

Video 6:

**◦ Defects of samsara**

eight types of suffering are identified; namely the sufferings of:

• birth,

• old age,

• sickness,

• death,

• meeting what is unpleasant,

• parting from what is pleasant,

• not finding what is being sought, and

• the five aggregates.

The noble eightfold path, which is part of the truth of the path, is taught as an antidote to these eight types of suffering.

These eight types of sufferings can also be condensed into three:

1. suffering of suffering (Skt. duḥkha duḥkhatā; Tib. སྡུག་བསྔལ་གྱི་སྡུག་བསྔལ་, Wyl. sdug bsngal gyi sdug bsngal)

2. suffering of change (Skt. vipariṇāma duḥkhatā; Tib. གྱུར་བའི་སྡུག་བསྔལ་, Wyl. 'gyur ba'i sdug bsngal)

3. all-pervasive suffering of conditioning (Skt. saṃskāra duḥkhatā; Tib. ཁྱབ་པ་འདུ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་སྡུག་བསྔལ་, Wyl. khyab pa 'du byed kyi sdug bsngal)

Series 2  
Video 1

**◦ Refuge and Bodhichitta**

⁃ Three types of faith

**Faith** (Skt. *śraddhā*; Tib. [དད་པ་](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=%E0%BD%91%E0%BD%91%E0%BC%8B%E0%BD%94%E0%BC%8B), *dépa*, [Wyl.](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Wyl.) *dad pa*) — one of the [fifty-one mental states](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Fifty-one_mental_states) defined in [Abhidharma](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Abhidharma) literature. According to the [*Compendium of Abhidharma*](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Compendium_of_Abhidharma), it belongs to the subgroup of the [eleven virtuous states](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Eleven_virtuous_states). In the teachings on refuge, it is said to be the gateway to [taking refuge](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Taking_refuge), which is of [three kinds](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Three_kinds_of_faith): [vivid faith](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Vivid_faith), [eager faith](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Eager_faith) and [confident faith](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Confident_faith).[[1]](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Faith#cite_note-1). In the practice of [meditation](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Meditation), it is the third antidote, from among the [eight antidotes](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Eight_antidotes), and is the antidote for [laziness](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Laziness).

In the [*Khenjuk*](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Khenjuk), [Mipham Rinpoche](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Mipham_Rinpoche) writes:

* Tib. དད་པ་ནི་ཡང་དག་པའི་གནས་ལ་དང་འདོད་ཡིད་ཆེས་པ་སྟེ་འདུན་པའི་རྟེན་བྱེད་པའོ།
* Faith is to have a vivid and eager mind towards, and have confidence in, that which is authentic and true. It supports [interest](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Interest). ([Rigpa Translations](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Rigpa_Translations))
* Faith is admiration of, longing towards, and trust in that which is true. It supports determination. ([Erik Pema Kunsang](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Erik_Pema_Kunsang))

[Sthiramati](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Sthiramati) in his commentary, *An Explanation of the* [*Thirty Stanzas*](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Thirty_Stanzas) (Skt. *Triṃśikābhāṣya*; Wyl. *sum cu pa'i bshad pa*),[[2]](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Faith#cite_note-2) writes:

* Faith includes complete confidence in the reality of [karma](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Karma) and its maturation; sincere faith in the [Four Truths of the Noble Ones](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Four_Truths_of_the_Noble_Ones); and eager faith regarding the capacities of qualified beings.

**Three kinds of** [**faith**](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Faith) (Tib. དད་པ་གསུམ་, *dépa sum*, Wyl. *dad pa gsum*) —

* **Vivid faith** (Tib. དང་བའི་དད་པ་, *dangwé dépa*, [Wyl.](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Wyl.) *dang ba'i dad pa*)

[Chökyi Drakpa](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Ch%C3%B6kyi_Drakpa) says: "Vivid faith comes from thinking of the qualities of the master and the [Three Jewels](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Three_Jewels). It is a very vivid and joyful state similar to the way a small child feels when seeing its mother."

* **Eager faith** (Tib. འདོད་པའི་དད་པ་, *döpé dépa*, [Wyl.](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Wyl.) *‘dod pa’i dad pa*)

[Chökyi Drakpa](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Ch%C3%B6kyi_Drakpa) says: "Eager faith is the eager wish to abandon [negative actions](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Negative_actions) having reflected on their faults; and the eager wish to undertake positive actions having considered the benefits they bring. It is similar to the yearning that someone suffering from extreme thirst has for water."

* **Confident faith** (Tib. ཡིད་ཆེས་ཀྱི་དད་པ་, *yiché pé dépa*; [Wyl.](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Wyl.) *yid ches kyi dad pa*)

[Chökyi Drakpa](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Ch%C3%B6kyi_Drakpa) says: "Confident faith is a confidence in the qualities of the master and the [Three Jewels](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Three_Jewels), which cannot be shaken by temporary circumstances or events, and a trust in the laws of cause and effect strong enough to survive the worst kind of circumstances such as illness. This is the kind of faith one should have."

**Irreversible faith** (Tib. ཕྱིར་མི་ལྡོག་པའི་དད་པ་, *chirmidokpé depa*; [Wyl.](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Wyl.) *phyir mi ldog pa'i dad pa*) — when we truly realize the natural state, this gives rise to an irreversible [faith](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Faith) in our [teacher](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Lama) and the [Three Jewels](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Three_Jewels). ‘Irreversible faith’ is sometimes presented as the fourth type of faith, after ‘[confident faith](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Confident_faith)’. It is a faith that is so much a part of ourselves that even if our lives were at risk, we would never give it up.

The cause of refuge is faith, and specifically irreversible faith.

Video 2

**The Essence of Refuge**

The essence of taking refuge is, to accept the Three Jewels—i.e. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha—as your refuge, and make a decisive commitment to them, in order to be free from the fear of your own and others’ suffering in samsara. You accept the Buddha as your guide, Dharma as your path and Sangha as your companions.

**The Objects of Refuge**

• The outer objects of refuge are the Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. We take refuge in the Buddha as our guide, the Dharma as the path and the Sangha as our companions.

• The inner objects of refuge are the Three Roots: Lama, Yidam and Khandro.

• The secret object of refuge is bodhichitta, the indestructible natural state which is realized through the special sublime method of the channels (Tib. རྩ་, tsa; Wyl. rtsa), inner air (Tib. རླུང་, lung; Wyl. rlung) and essences (Tib. ཐིག་ལེ་, tiklé; Wyl. thig le).

• The ultimate objects of refuge, according to Dzogchen, are the three kayas within the nature of our own minds: the empty essence (Tib. ངོ་བོ་སྟོངས་པ་, ngowo tongpa; Wyl. ngo bo stong pa), cognizant nature (Tib. རང་བཞིན་གསལ་བ་, rangshyin salwa; Wyl. rang bzhin gsal ba) and unconfined compassionate energy (Tib. ཐུགས་རྗེ་འགགས་མེད་, tukjé gakme; Wyl. thugs rje 'gags med).

Video 3

**The Duration of Refuge**

Followers of the Basic Vehicle take refuge temporarily for as long as they live, and ultimately until they attain their own particular fruition. The followers of the Mahayana take refuge until attaining complete enlightenment.

**Causal and Resultant Refuge**

Khenpo Sönam Tobden says:

There is an example given to illustrate the difference between causal and resultant refuge: Imagine someone who is poor and suffering. On the one hand this person could ask for help from a rich person who gives refuge and protection. This is like causal refuge. On the other hand, this person could think, "Now I’m going to do whatever I can, by myself, to get rich." This is like resultant refuge.

The commentary to Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind says:

In this regard, according to the vehicle of characteristics, the wish to attain the ultimate dharmakaya and realize it in one’s mind is the resultant refuge, and to take refuge in the Three Jewels as one’s guides until this has been attained, thus creating the cause for its attainment, is the causal refuge. See Yukhok Chatralwa Chöying Rangdrol, Taking Refuge.

Video 4:

**The Precepts of Refuge**

The great master Atisha was nicknamed the 'Refuge Pandita'

Chökyi Drakpa says:

As regards the precepts and benefits of taking refuge, in terms of precepts there are three things to be abandoned, three things to be adopted and three supplementary precepts.

• Firstly, having taken refuge in the Buddha, do not take worldly deities such as local spirits as your outer refuge and do not make offerings to them. Having taken refuge in the Dharma, refrain from harming other beings. Having taken refuge in the Sangha, do not associate with non-buddhist extremists (tirthikas), or anyone whose behavior is contrary to the teachings.

• Regarding the three things to be adopted, having taken refuge in the Buddha, you should honor and respect any representation of his body, even a tiny piece of broken statue. Having taken refuge in the Dharma, you should respect and take care to preserve the written teachings, even fragments of paper bearing a single syllable. In the past, when Lord Atisha saw a scribe putting his pen in his mouth as he wrote, he cried out, “Atsama! That’s not right!” Having taken refuge in the Sangha, even a patch of red or yellow cloth from their robes should inspire you with faith.

• As supplementary precepts, rely upon your spiritual master and practise without doing anything that violates or conflicts with his body, speech or mind. Listen to the teachings and follow the Dharma and the Sangha.

Patrul Rinpoche says:

In this, there are six specific precepts and five general ones.

*Six Specific Precepts*

In the specific precepts, there are three things to adopt and three things to abandon.

*Three Things to Adopt*

1. Practise according to the words of the Buddha and then, without forgetting them, generate faith and devotion. Show respect even for broken fragments of statues and images of the Buddha.

2. Exert yourself in studying, reflecting and meditating on the sacred Dharma. Show respect even for torn scriptures that represent the Dharma.

3. Respect the sangha who are followers of the Buddha, associate with virtuous friends, and treat even tiny pieces of yellow cloth as objects worthy of reverence.

*Three Things to Abandon*

1. Having taken refuge in the Buddha, you should not worship any gods who are still bound within the cycle of samsara.

2. Having taken refuge in the Dharma, you should not inflict harm upon any sentient being.

3. Having taken refuge in the Sangha, you should not associate with friends who hold extreme views.

*Five General Precepts*

1. Do not forsake the Three Jewels, even at the cost of your life.

2. Even in important ventures, do not seek other methods.

3. Do not interrupt your regular practice.

4. Encourage yourself and others to take refuge.

5. Pay homage to the buddha of whichever direction you travel.

**Series 3**

**Four Noble Truths & Eightfold Path**

**Series 4**

**Bodhichitta & Six Paramitas**

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