

Lojong Slogans 50-59; Point Seven

Translated by Nalanda Translation Committee (PT: Volume 2 Profound Treasury /

Translated by Traleg Kyabgon (PL: The Practice of Lojong)

50. Don't be swayed by external circumstances / *Don't depend on external conditions*

PT: Although external circumstances may vary, your practice should not depend on that.

PL: Practice whenever and wherever possible, not just when the right conditions are present.

51. This time, practice the main points / *This time, practice the important points*

PT: "This time" refers to this lifetime. Without wasting time, practice these three main points:

1. The benefit of others is more important than yourself.
2. Practicing the teachings is more important than analytical study.
3. Practicing bodhichitta is more important than any other practice.

PL: The lojong spirit is about investing our time and energy into whatever advances our spiritual development. Three main points:

1. *Other people are more important than we are.*
2. *Practice is more important than understanding.*
3. *Bodhichitta is most important of all.*

52. Don't misinterpret / *Avoid misunderstandings*

PT: The six primary things we tend to misinterpret are:

1. Patience – to be patient about everything in life except for the practice of dharma
2. Yearning – to foster yearning for pleasure and wealth, but not for the practice of dharma
3. Excitement – to get excited about wealth and entertainment, but not the study of dharma
4. Compassion – to be compassionate for those who endure hardships in order to practice the dharma, but not to those who do evil
5. Priorities – to work diligently out of self interest for what benefits you in the world, but not to practice the dharma
6. Joy – to be happy when sorrow afflicts your enemies, but not to rejoice in virtue and transcending samsara

PL: Misunderstanding is the result of not being able to distinguish what we need to cultivate and what we need to eliminate from our lives. There are six fundamental errors:

- 1. Misunderstanding patience – We often lack fortitude in the face of spiritual hardship, but are quite willing to accept difficult or unpleasant circumstances in our everyday lives.*
- 2. Misunderstanding interest – If we wish to develop as human beings, we need to let go of our interest in trivial, counterfeit, or distracting pursuits and turn our attention to spiritual matters instead.*
- 3. Misunderstanding how to savor things – We are led by our taste for the sensual pleasures to “lick honey from a razor blade”. Savoring the taste of spiritual bliss instead of the fake simulated pleasures of the samsaric world will bring us genuine excitement and joy.*
- 4. Misunderstanding compassion: “Idiot compassion” (CTR) Not skillfully using our intelligence to distinguish between worthy and unworthy objects (or people). The real objects of our compassion should be people who have no sense of direction and not enough insight...*
- 5. Misunderstanding how to give help to others: Giving someone what they want is not necessarily a helpful act. Extending ourselves to someone by helping them see through the fog of their self-recrimination and anger is how we offer genuine assistance.*
- 6. Misunderstanding what it means to rejoice: Before we rejoice in someone else’s actions, we should learn whether they are motivated by any of the five poisons (passion/attachment, aggression/aversion, ignorance, pride, envy).*

53. Don’t vacillate / *Don’t fluctuate*

PT: If you sometimes practice and other times do not, that will not give birth to certainty in the dharma.

PL: A stable approach that gradually immerses us in something is far more productive than acting in sporadic bursts.

54. Train wholeheartedly / *Train wholeheartedly*

PT: Trust yourself and your practice wholeheartedly. Train with no distractions.

PL: Our expectations must be realistic and we have to fulfill them in a graduated manner, but we should always set our goals high and do what we can without “hope” or “fear”.

55. Liberate yourself by examining and analyzing / *Find freedom through investigation and examination*

PT: Simply look at your mind and analyze it.

PL: From time to time we need to ask penetrating questions such as the following:

- *What is the self?*
- *What is the mind?*
- *What is ultimate reality?*
- *What is samsara and ignorance?*

Investigation is about analyzing things in general terms, while examination is about analyzing them in detail.

56. *Don't wallow in self pity / Don't expect gratitude*

PT: If someone else achieves success or inherits a million dollars, don't waste time feeling bad that it wasn't you.

PL: When we are too desirous of something in life, we're less likely to attain it. The same logic applies to our need for recognition. If we want to show kindness, we should just leave it at that.

57. *Don't be jealous / Don't react impulsively with anger or irritation*

PT: Don't be jealous if somebody else receives praise and you do not.

PL: It's not necessary to always act impulsively, allowing our responses to get the better of us. The main point is that we are less likely to react with anger or irritation if we feel good about ourselves.

58. *Don't be frivolous / Don't be like an open book*

PT: It is frivolous to be jealous of your friend's success.

PL: Whether we are happy or sad, we should be even-tempered as possible, not suppressing our emotions, but presenting a consistent demeanor so that others will welcome any help we have to offer.

59. *Don't expect applause / Don't expect people to make a fuss over what you are doing*

PT: Don't count on receiving credit for your good deeds or good practice.

PL: The reward is not like a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow – the practice itself is the goal. What further reward is there beyond finding that our actions are gratifying, meaningful, and purposeful in themselves?