

Karmic Correlations

Problem	Cause	Antidote
Your body is stricken by some unbearable sickness	Doing harm to the bodies of other people.	Take upon your own body all the sickness that comes to anyone at all.
You feel any kind of pain inside of your own thoughts.	Upsetting other people.	Take on yourself the hurt that others feel.
You are tormented by feelings of thirst and hunger.	Burdening others financially, thieving, stealing and failing to share.	Take on yourself the hunger and thirst of others.
You suffer in the service of another whose authority is more.	Arrogance towards those who are less than you, and forcing others to do your work.	Force your own body and life into the service of others.
You hear unpleasant words from others.	Mistakes you've made in the different things you've said divisive talk and such.	Talk bad only about what you yourself say that's wrong.
Things strike you as something unpleasant.	Constantly seeing your world as something less than totally pure.	Devote yourself to seeing things only as purity.
You find yourself without anyone to help you, no friends of your own.	Leading away those who were close to another.	Never act in a way that makes others lose the ones who are close to them.
Not a single spiritual kind of person likes you in the least.	Giving up spiritual friends, and associating with people who have no noble thoughts.	Give up being close to people who have no interest in the spiritual life.
You suddenly lose all that you need to live on.	Laying to waste the things that others depend on to live.	Find ways to supply for others the things they need to live.
You can't think clearly, and feel depressed at heart.	Leading others to constantly do bad deeds.	Avoid ever being a reason for others to do something wrong.
The things you try to accomplish never seem to work out, and you feel upset to the core.	Obstructing the work of holy beings.	Give up ever being a hindrance to holy beings.
No matter what you do, your Lama never seems pleased.	Hypocrisy in your practice of the Dharma.	Try to be less insincere within your spiritual life.
Everyone around you seems to criticize your every move.	Not caring from your own side whether you're good, or how what you do affects others.	Avoid doing any actions that are inconsiderate.
As soon as you bring together a group of people around you, they begin to strive against one another.	Wishing ill on others, and splitting people into sides.	Never wish ill on others, and only do them well.
Those closest to you turn instead to enemies.	Hiding within your-self thoughts to bring others harm.	Try to lessen tendency of planning to trip up others.
Serious sickness comes to you, such as pneumonia, fevers of death, cancer, or water filling your limbs.	Breaking the rules and sullyng your-self by the act of wrongly using those things that were supposed to be used for Dharma.	Never do anything like stealing objects meant for Dharma use.
You are stricken by migraines that wrack your body.	Doing those things that you pledged to never do.	Avoid every non-virtuous act.
You are yourself unable to understand a single thing.	Following spiritual paths that are better left behind.	Spend your time in learning and the rest, in pursuing perfect wisdom.

You are overcome by sleepiness as you try to do your spiritual practices.	The karma of behaving in a way towards the Dharma that blocks your future understanding.	Undertake any kind of hardship for the sake of your spiritual life.
Your own mind seems to enjoy the mental afflictions within it, and constantly wanders away.	Failing to think of the fact that you'll not be here long, and the many other problems of this vicious circle of life.	Try to feel more tired of living here in the circle of pain.
All the activities that you begin go steadily down, and then fail.	Disregarding the laws of karma itself, as well as the consequences of the things you do.	Try your best to collect good karma.
All the attempts you make to honour and offer to holy ones seem to go awry.	Putting your hopes in the negative side of things.	Reject all negativity.
You are unable to seek the help of the Triple Gem.	Not believing in the Buddha, an enlightened being.	Place yourself only in the care of all three of the Jewels.
You are attacked by worries, by obstacles in your mind, and spirits come to haunt you.	Doing wrong deeds towards Angels and around the teachings of the secret word.	Stop all the negative thoughts that wander throughout your mind all day.
You have no place to stay, and wander helplessly here and there like a bear lost far from home.	Forcing Lamas and such to leave behind their homes.	Never drive someone from the place they live.
Disasters like frost or hail or anything of the like appear.	Failing to properly keep your pledges and the other such codes.	Keep your pledges, and so on, pure and clean.
Your want for things is great, but you're unable to pay for them.	Failing to give to others, and offer to the Jewels.	Work hard to make offerings, and to give.
You look ugly to others, and those around you insult you for it.	Making holy images without taking the proper care, and letting anger drive you into a state of turmoil.	Craft holy images correctly, and learn to endure with patience.
No matter what you do, you find your peace of mind disturbed by likes and dislikes.	Allowing your-self to wallow in negative states of mind.	Reject all feelings of "you against me."
Whatever you undertake fails in the aim you'd hoped for.	Holding in your heart a harmful way of seeing things.	Whatever you do, do it for the sake of others.
You practice Dharma as much as you can, but still cannot control your mind.	Seeking ways to be important in a worldly way.	Hope only for freedom, devoting your-self to it.
You second-guess your own virtuous thoughts.	Failing to care for others' feelings, making friends with anyone you meet, and pretending to be more than you are.	Take great care in choosing those you associate with.
Other people weave their wiles, and totally mislead you.	Thinking only of your-self, of pride, and of hoping for recognition.	Don't let on to anyone all the personal qualities that you've been able to gain.
All the teaching and learning of Dharma that you do has degenerated into feelings of liking and disliking.	Failing to consider deep within your thoughts all the trouble the demons can bring.	Watch for things that can hurt your practice, and give up all of them.
All the things that you've done right suddenly turn to something wrong.	Repaying kindness that others have done for you with the very opposite.	Bow your head and with the utmost respect return each kindness granted.

This chart is derived from the lojong text on developing the good heart entitled "The Wheel of Knives" written by the Indian master Dharma Rakshita who lived about a Thousand years ago.

Purification through the Four Opponent Powers

SEEDS AND IMPRINTS

All of the negative karma that we accumulate as beginners on the path arises as a result of the actions that we engage in under the power of the two types of obscurations. Though we will be unable to cease the accumulation of negative karma completely as long as we have delusions, through the application of the practice of the four opponent powers we can purify the resultant suffering that would otherwise arise from them. If we apply the four opponent powers perfectly, we can even purify the fruit of actions whose results are certain to be experienced.

Now perhaps you are confused. On the one hand, I am saying that through the practice of purification you can purify all of your negative karma, and on the other hand, we have already discussed that there are actions whose karmic results must definitely be experienced. These two appear to be contradictory. But actually, they are not. Those karmic results that are certain to be experienced are those actions to which the four opponent powers have not been applied at all. Karma that is *not* certain to be experienced is so regardless of whether it has been purified by the four opponent powers or not.

Although the practice of the four opponent powers can purify the experience of suffering that results from our negative actions, it cannot eliminate their seeds or imprints. In the same way, when it is taught that a single moment of anger can destroy the thousands of eons of merit accumulated through practicing generosity and so forth,²² what is destroyed is the ripening result of that virtue, not its seeds or imprints. This is an important distinction.

At this point, perhaps it would be helpful to give a brief explanation of what we mean when we discuss *karmic seeds* and *karmic imprints*. The difference between a seed and an imprint is primarily a matter of subtlety—a karmic imprint is more subtle than a karmic seed, and thus it is more difficult to eliminate the imprint of an action from the mind than it is to eliminate the seed. The two also function differently within the mind. According to the philosophical texts, the karmic imprint of ignorance is what causes the appearance of inherent existence, and the karmic seed is what ripens to cause the grasping at that appearance.

The process of creating an imprint works as follows. When we do a virtuous physical action, the physical sense consciousness plants an imprint of that virtuous action in our mental consciousness. Roughly, this can be compared to making a copy on a Xerox machine. Because the action is virtuous, when the substantial continuum of that positive imprint of this physical virtue ripens as a sensory consciousness, it will ripen in a similar experience.

Imprints are not considered consciousness or form, yet they are composite phenomena. Also, the imprints of virtuous and nonvirtuous karma themselves are not considered to be either virtuous or nonvirtuous; rather they are neutral by nature. However, although the imprint itself is neutral, its *substantial continuum* may be either positive or negative. This is determined by the status of the action that created the imprint—if the action was positive, the substantial continuum of the imprint will be positive, and if the action was negative, the substantial continuum of the imprint will be negative as well.

A substantial continuum is one type of continuum of consciousness, and the continuum of a similar type is another. There are also two types of continuums of imprints: the substantial continuum and the continuum of the similar type. The continuum of the similar type of an imprint must always remain of the same nature—meaning that it cannot be altered by the four opponent powers. In fact, the continuum of the similar type can only be altered by the direct realization of emptiness. The substantial continuum, however, can be affected by the four opponent powers. The negative karmic imprints of the substantial continuum cannot be eliminated by this method, but they can be blocked.

When the karmic action has been purified by the method of the four opponent powers, then the conditions for the karmic seed to ripen are completely removed, although the seed itself remains. For example, when one generates calm abiding, it is no longer possible for the gross delusions of the desire realm to manifest. The seeds of the delusions remain in the mind, but they cannot meet with the internal conditions to ripen them, so there is no gross manifestation of the delusions. The converse is also true. One moment of anger is said to destroy a thousand eons of merit arising from generosity and making offerings. Again, this anger cannot destroy the seed of virtue, but it removes the internal conditions that will ripen that seed and bring forth happiness.

THE ACTUAL PRACTICE OF THE FOUR OPPONENT POWERS

All of the four Buddhist philosophical schools accept the practice of the four opponent powers as a method to purify negative karma. The four opponent powers are the power of regret, the power of the antidote, the power of the resolution, and the power of the basis.

Within the four points of this practice, applying the first power, the power of regret, is the most important. Your application of the power of regret should be supported by your understanding of karma, your understanding of the consequences of your actions, and, in particular, your understanding of karmic results. When you understand these things clearly and think about a negative action that you have done—today, yesterday, in this lifetime, or in other lifetimes—regret will arise without effort. However, in order to develop this heightened awareness of actions and their consequences, you must be mindful and aware of your physical, verbal, and mental actions. If you do not have any sense of mindfulness of your thoughts and actions, then it will not matter how much you know about karma—you will not be able to generate regret. And as long as you do not feel regret for your nonvirtuous actions, no matter how well you apply the other three powers, it will be impossible to purify your negative karma. The power of regret empowers the other three.

For example, when you recite one mantra, such as *tayatha gate gate parasamgate bodhi soha*, three times, seven times, or twenty-one times, it can only become the power of the antidote if you recite it in conjunction with the power of regret. Without the mind of regret, it is still a virtuous activity, but it is not the power of the antidote. Likewise, even if you spend an hour meditating on emptiness, without cultivating the mind of strong regret this meditation cannot become the power of the antidote.

The power of the antidote is the second power of the four. In the *Lam-rim Chenmo*, Lama Tsongkhapa cites six specific practices that function as the power of the antidote.

The first antidote is reciting suras. This usually refers to the recitation of the *Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom*, of which there are the long, medium, and short versions. The first antidote also includes memorizing, reading, and reflecting on the meaning of these texts.

The second antidote is meditation on emptiness. This refers primarily to meditation on the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena.

In addition to this, we can also reflect on the emptiness of the “I” that has accumulated the negative karma, the emptiness of the negative karma itself, and the emptiness of the action that was done to accumulate it. We can reflect that ultimately these do not exist inherently, and that the basic innate nature of the conventional mind is luminous, clear, and knowing. We can also think that our nonvirtuous karmic imprints are temporary pollutions obscuring the mind, and that they do not exist innately in the nature of mind itself.

It is said that merely generating a single thought of the positive form of doubt with regard to the philosophy of emptiness has the effect of setting a crack in one’s cyclic existence. Because of this, even if you do not have a clear ascertainment of emptiness, as long as you apply the emptiness of the three spheres based in the mind of regret as an antidote to your non-virtue, you can be assured that it will definitely affect the ripening result of your karma.

The third antidote is the recitation of mantras, particularly the hundred-syllable Vajrasattva mantra. In general, the recitation of mantras can be thought of as fierce flames that burn away the seeds of negative karma. However, in order for a mantra to have this effect, you must have the basis of pure ethics in your mind, having kept the pledges, vows, and commitments of your practices purely. And again, this power of the antidote must be rooted in the power of regret—merely reciting a mantra is not sufficient. Also, when you use mantra recitation as the power of the antidote, you should always do so with the intent to continue the recitation until you definitely feel the signs of purification. Doing a required quota of mantras can become merely a form of taxation, and once it becomes so it will probably not fulfill the objectives of the practice. Of course, as we are living in degenerate times, sometimes imposing the supreme form of recitation might deter us from making any attempt to practice at all. In order to prevent this situation, certain quotas are given to encourage us to fulfill a minimal number of recitations. However, the very best way to practice is to continue our recitation until the signs of purification arise, regardless of the number.

General signs of purification that may arise during the course of doing intensive purification practices include dreaming of eating yogurt or drinking milk, flying in space, or vomiting terrible substances. Dreams of seeing

flames—particularly seeing one's body in flames—and wearing new clothing, seeing Sangha members, listening to teachings, sitting on high thrones, and entering beautiful palaces are also signs of purification. If you dream of these things in times of retreat or intensive periods of practice, you can understand them to be external signs of successful purification. More importantly, the internal signs should include fewer delusional minds arising, a strong, extraordinary sense of a new understanding, and powerful faith in karmic cause and effect. Also, you may experience the arising of the extraordinary pure mind of refuge, more faith in your spiritual teachers, and a clearer understanding of the paths of method and wisdom.

The fourth of the six antidotes is making statues, or making anything that symbolizes the enlightened holy body, holy speech, and holy mind of the buddhas. We shouldn't buy statues or *tangkas* or *stupas* with a wish to make our rooms look more grand, but rather with a wish to purify our negative karma. When we make *tsa-tsas*, we shouldn't do so for the purpose of fulfilling the required number, but for the purpose of purification.

The fifth of the six antidotes is making offerings, which we have already discussed briefly. When we make offerings, they should be free of the pollution of the material and free of the pollution of the motivation. Free of the pollution of the material means that they should not have been acquired through means of wrong livelihood. Free of the pollution of the motivation means free of the motivation of the eight worldly dharmas, free of the thought that seeks the happiness of this life alone, and free of the thought that seeks the reputation of someone who makes extensive offerings. The minds of pure faith and devotion are the most essential part of the offering. Even if you make a priceless offering, if your mind lacks faith and devotion and is totally ensnared in worldly dharmas, then your offering becomes very small. And even if you only offer seven simple bowls of water, if your mind is rich in faith and devotion, your offering becomes very great. Also, in the context of the four opponent powers, we should remember to root our minds in the strong thought of regret when we make offerings.

The sixth of the six antidotes is reciting a name mantra, such as that of Shakyamuni Buddha, a bodhisattva, or one's spiritual teacher.

Tsongkhapa cites these examples from Shantideva's *Compendium of Trainings*. But in summary we can say that any virtuous activities we

undertake physically, verbally, or mentally can be dedicated as a means of the power of the antidote purifying negative karma.

The third power within the four opponent powers is the power of the resolution not to engage in nonvirtuous actions again. As long as you have faith in karma, and as long as you understand the ripening results of your karmic actions, this kind of resolution should be naturally forthcoming. One hundred percent of the power of the resolution is dependent upon the power of regret. If you have a very strong sense of regret, you will be like a person who has eaten poison by mistake—you will do everything possible to get the poison out and neutralize its effects as quickly as possible.

To complete the purification, the powers of regret and resolution are essential. Sometimes we get all wrapped up in the power of the antidote because we find it very exciting to have many things to do. Yet the first and the third of the four opponent powers are really the most important. As beginners, practices such as using meditation on emptiness as our antidote are quite beyond us. Before we can tackle the roots of our suffering, we need to try to tackle the suffering itself. We do this by cultivating the pure mind of refuge, cultivating the pure mind of bodhichitta, and focusing on regret and resolution. This is within our capacity and most important at our level.

The fourth power is the power of the basis, which is refuge and generating bodhichitta. Refuge and bodhichitta are regarded as the power of the basis because we usually accumulate negative karma on the basis of sentient beings and on the basis of holy objects. Just as we take the support of the ground itself to help us stand up again when we have fallen down, in the same way, the negative karma that we accumulate in relation to sentient beings must be purified in relation to sentient beings. To fulfill this requirement, we generate bodhichitta. Also, the negative karma we accumulate in relation to holy objects must be purified in relation to those holy objects. To fulfill this requirement we generate refuge.

As we mentioned, the four opponent powers do not purify negative karma down to its very roots, but they can lessen or eliminate the resultant suffering. For example, having applied the four opponent powers to a particularly powerful karmic action, you could still experience the result of being reborn in the lower realms, but you may not suffer there. Alternatively, you may be reborn in the lower realms for a very short time, or

you may even experience the result of that powerful negative karma as a very small amount of suffering in the human realm. And, if you are able to apply the four opponent powers with great strength and over a very long period of time, very powerful karma can ripen with almost no suffering at all.

We should remember that even the smallest amount of purification practice is never meaningless—if we didn't make any attempts at purification at all, our suffering would be even more extensive and continuous. However, we shouldn't think that since the four opponent powers exist as a remedy, it gives us license to do anything that we want and then purify it. This is like breaking your legs on purpose, thinking that they can be fixed later on. Between a leg that's fixed and a leg that was never broken, it's better to have an unbroken leg from the very beginning. Although bodhisattvas who incur a root downfall can purify that particular action, once they have created that downfall, there is no possibility that they can realize the truth directly in that particular lifetime. Thus we should understand that all negative actions always have consequences on some level, even if they are purified.

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A commentary on the Lam Rim
Chenmo

by Yangsi Rinpoche

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Non-virtue	Basis	Perception	Motivation	Affliction	Performance	culmination
Killing	Another sentient being	Knowing a sb to be a sb	Desiring to kill (either specific sb or in general)	Any of the 3 poisons	Killing (or causing someone else to kill	The other dying before you do
Stealing	That which is owned by another	Recognising it as belonging to them	Desiring to take it w/out permission	Any of the 3 poisons	Taking the thing by force or deceit	Thinking that you now have it
Sexual misconduct	Inappropriate person, body part, place, time	Recognising the person, body part etc	Desiring to have sex	Any of the 3 poisons	The parts coming into contact	Experiencing the pleasure of insertion
Lying	That seen, heard, distinguished, cognised (or not)	Knowing what has been seen etc and intending to lie about it	Desire to deceive another being	Any of the 3 poisons	Indicating through speech or gesture what you know is not true	The other person understanding (not necessarily believing)
Divisive speech	Living beings who are compatible or incompatible	Knowing what will divide them (or keep them apart)	Desire to divide people	Any of the 3 poisons	Saying or doing something to divide them	The other people understanding you
Harsh speech	Another being	Knowing what will harm the person	Desire to speak in an offensive manner	Any of the 3 poisons	Saying an offensive thing	The other person understand you
Senseless speech	Speech about a topic that is not meaningful	Identifying a senseless topic	To say senseless things	Any of the 3 poisons	Saying the senseless thing	Finishing saying the senseless thing
Covetousness	An object owned by someone else	Perceiving that it belongs to another	Desire to make it your own	Any of the 3 poisons	Striving to make it yours	The determination to make it yours with 5 attitudes
Malice	Another being	Knowing what will harm that being	The desire to harm through hitting or killing	Any of the 3 poisons	Thinking to harm	Determination to harm with 5 attitudes
Wrong Views	Existent objects	Perceiving to be true the denial of existent objects	Desire to deny things that exist	Any of the 3 poisons	Denying any of four existent things: Causes; Effects; Activities; Existent entities.	Certainty that you have denied the thing: 5 attitudes:

Covetousness, malice and wrong views each need 5 attitudes in order to be full actions:

covetousness	Malice	Wrong views
Grasping at own things	Hostility	Confusion
Attached - wanting more things	Impatience	Not wanting to listen to what is right
Long for others' things	Resentfulness	Persist because of improper teachings
Envious thinking others' things should be yours	Envy	Impaired attitude (things don't exist)
Not wanting to let go of this kind of mind	Without shame for your malice	Shameless - not wanting to be free of faults

Non virtue	Undertaken with	Completed with
Killing	Any of the 3 poisons	Hostility
Offensive speech	Any of the 3 poisons	Hostility
Malice	Any of the 3 poisons	Hostility
Stealing	Any of the 3 poisons	Attachment
Sexual misconduct	Any of the 3 poisons	Attachment
Covetousness	Any of the 3 poisons	Attachment
Lying	Any of the 3 poisons	Any of the 3 poisons
Divisive speech	Any of the 3 poisons	Any of the 3 poisons
Senseless speech	Any of the 3 poisons	Any of the 3 poisons
Wrong views	Any of the 3 poisons	Delusion (ignorance)

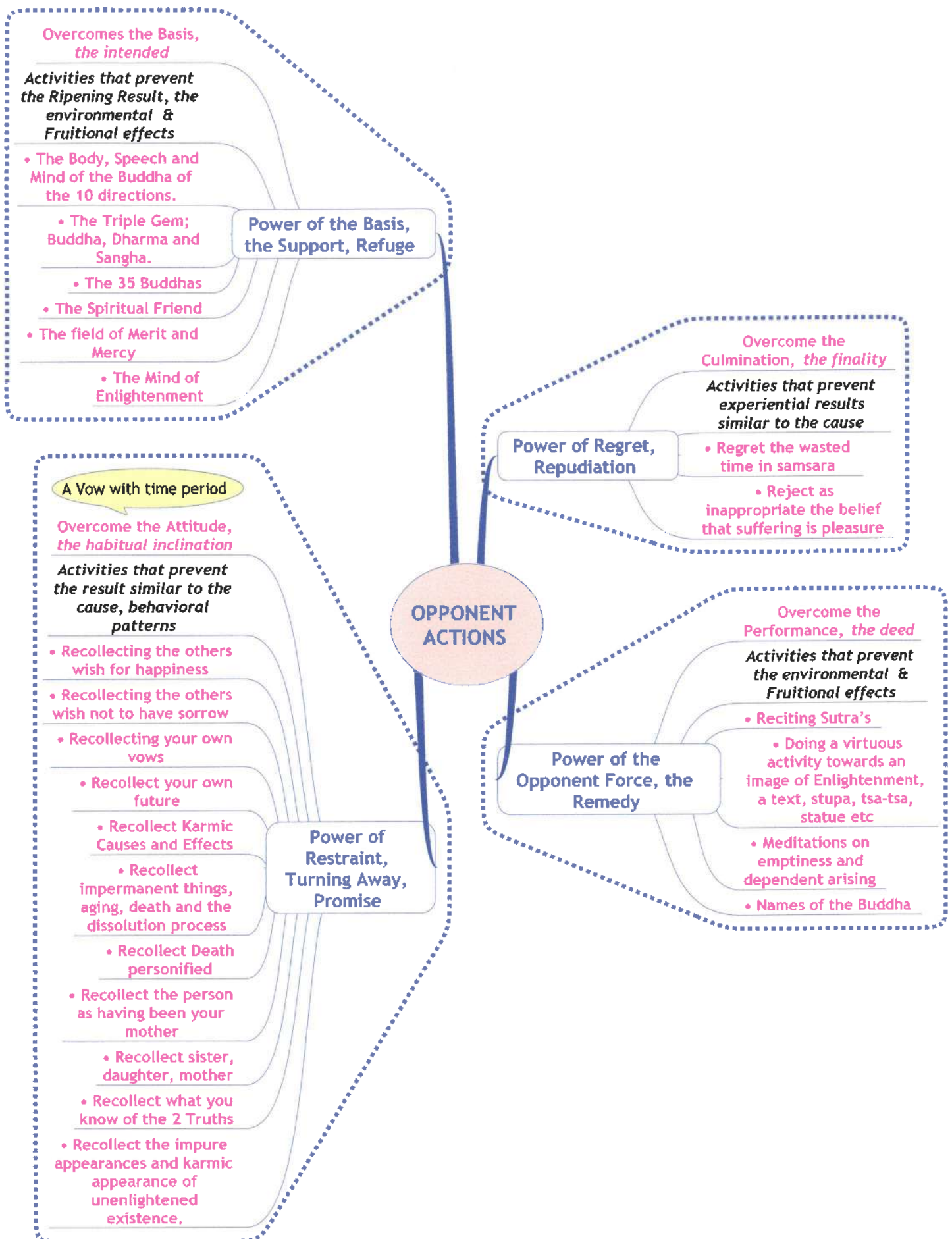
The three mental non virtues are paths of action but not actions and the other 7 are both paths of action and also actions.

Levels of Yogic Deeds:

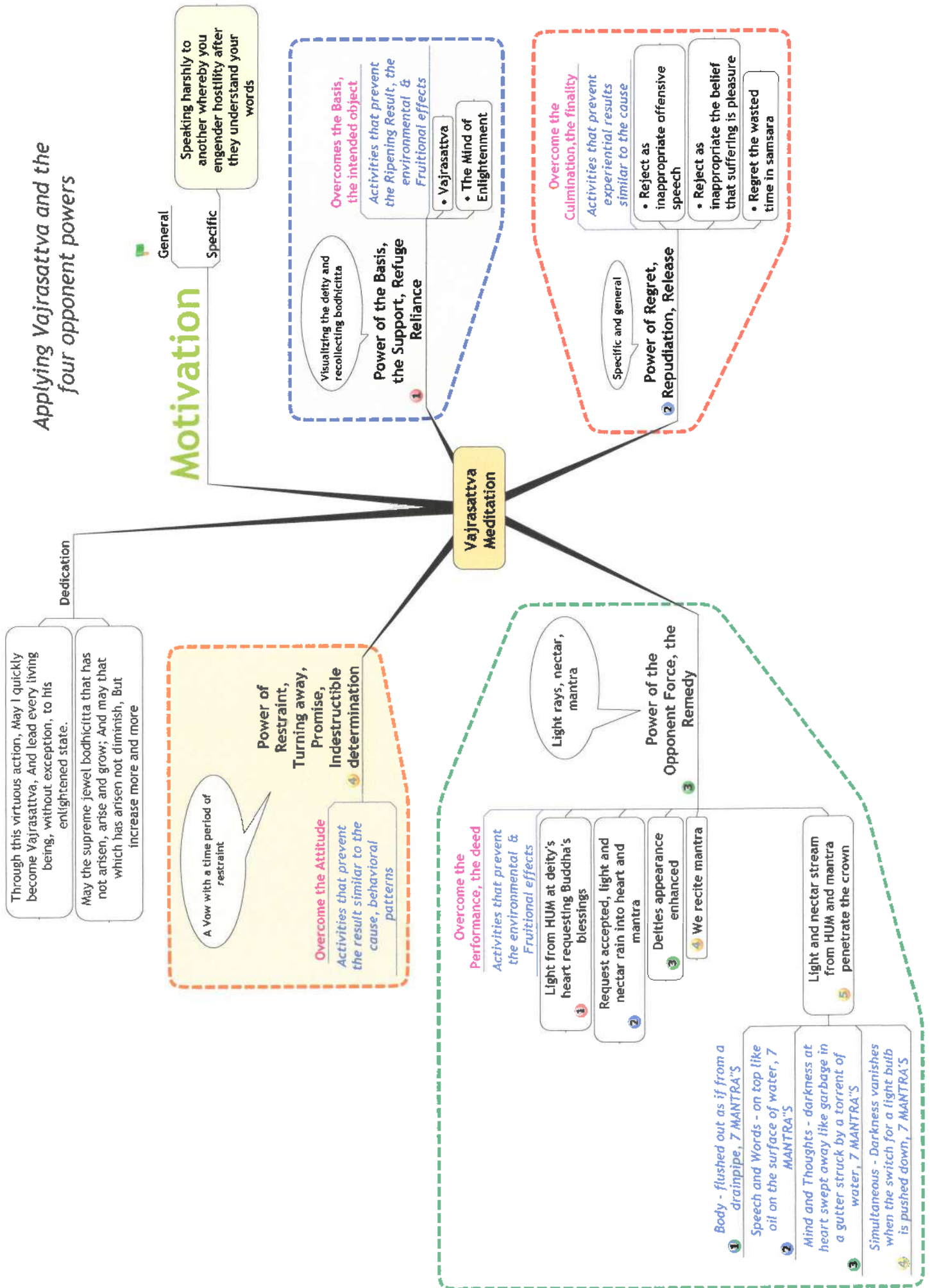
Six ways in which actions (good or bad) are weighty:

1. **Conditioning** (motivated by very strong afflictions or positive mental factors)
2. **Habituation** (done often and for a long time)
3. **Nature** (in the actions of body and speech the earlier ones are heavier and in the mental ones the later ones are heavier)
4. **Basis** (actions that harm or help gurus, or the 3 jewels)
5. **Fixation on incompatible factors** (always doing nonvirtue and never virtue)
6. **Eradication of unfavorable factors** (free from non-virtue you cultivate virtue only)

Action	Weighty due to attitude	Due to the performance	Due to there being no antidote present	Due to clinging to the perverse	Due to the basis
KILLING	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise it - done in a horrible way with torture etc	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	Eg large animals, human (incl foetus,embryo) guru bodhisattva etc
STEALING	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	Lots of good things or from holy beings etc
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	Oral, with mother or nun, near a stupa, during one-day vows
LYING	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	To a guru, buddha, those who have been kind to you
DIVISIVE SPEECH	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	The community
HARSH SPEECH	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	To parents or gurus - harsh speech that is lies
SENSELESS SPEECH	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	Fighting and faultfinding
COVETOUSNESS	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	Wanting things that have been given to the community or to holy objects
MALICE	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	Towards gurus parents etc or those that have harmed but apologise
WRONG VIEWS	Due to very strong delusions	When you get pleasure out of it and praise the action	Without confessing taking precepts etc	Having firm belief that what you are doing is right (other beliefs)	Those that deny fundamental Buddhist tenets



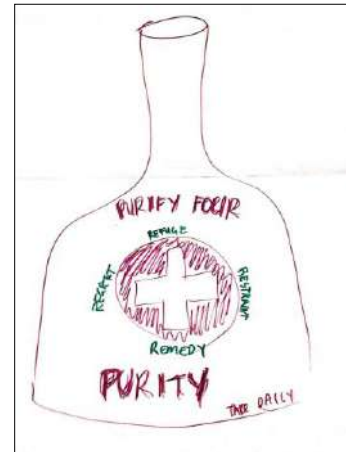
Applying Vajrasattva and the four opponent powers



Analogies for All About Karma June DB retreat Day 2012

The Four Opponent Powers are like a PURGATIVE MEDICINE because...

- Just as a purgative medicine evacuates poison leading to better health, the four opponent powers purify the karmic seed that would lead to resultant suffering.
- Regret: in the same way we regret eating food that has been poisoned, when we see others around us vomiting, we regret our negative action because we know we will suffer for it later on. Just as a sick person doesn't feel guilty, we don't feel guilt for unskillful behaviour, but a healthy regret.
- Remedy/opponent: in the same way that others would take a purgative medicine to recover their health, we take the medicinal antidote and engage in virtuous action to rebalance the negative.
- Promise: just as we would not take another bite of poisoned food, we promise not to engage in unskillful actions for a specific period of time.
- Refuge: just as we rely on a doctor to help us recover our physical health, we rely on an authentic refuge and the restorative of bodhicitta to recover our mental health.

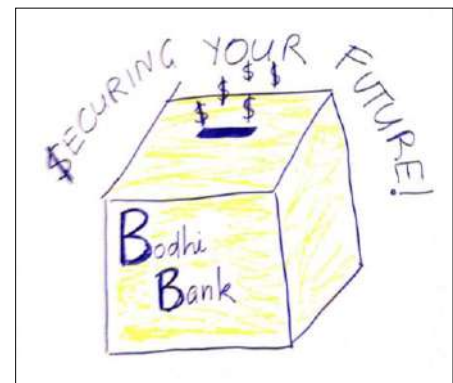


*“Take the Four Opponent’s
Power Potion and
PURIFY FOUR PURITY
(Take Daily)”*

(Eddie Peet, David Butler and Jane Dun)

Good karma is like a BANK ACCOUNT because...

- You deposit savings in an investment account and receive a guaranteed return, just as the results of positive actions are certain to bring happy results.
- Just as if you take out a loan, it's certain that in the long term you will end up with more debt, not more money, so too if your actions are negative, its certain the results they bring will be unhappy.
- Just as we aim to get the best long term interest rates, good karma increases the most with a bodhicitta motivation.
- No deposit, no interest accrued; just as you don't experience a result for which you haven't got the cause.
- You save for your future rather than spending now, just like you don't waste your good karma now by living it up in smasara, but save your merit for future lives.

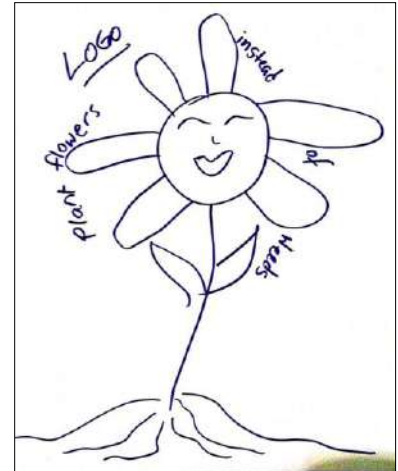


“Bank with Bodhicitta for an enlightened future!”

(Carolyn Mason, Petra Skoien and Barbara Duffy)

The four types of karmic result are like a karma garden because...

- Just as a tree is a long-term plant, there for the duration of many seasons in the garden, so too is rebirth into a life-form the fully-ripened result of a karmic action, there to experience the many changing circumstances.
- Just as the ornamental plants and shrubs set the tone of the garden, the environmental result is like the background of your life. Is your environment very parched and barren (the result of harsh speech)? Lush and verdant (result of generosity)? Or swampy and filled with rubbish (result of sexual misconduct)?
- The experiencing result is like having a flourishing garden or one that is unproductive. Just as if we sow productive actions we get great results, but if we sow half-hearted or negative actions we have very little to show for it.
- The behavioural result is like the seeds of actions producing more seeds, which produce more actions, which in turn generate more seeds, just like a habitual actions produces a stronger propensity to repeat it again.



*“Look after your own garden first!
Have I done my daily Dharma gardening?”*

(Dan Martin, Holly Patterson & Allison Douglas)

The four principles of karma are like PLANTING AN APPLE ORCHARD because...

- Just like you only get apple trees from an apple seeds (and will never get an orange tree), the results of karma are certain.
- Just like you can get many apples (and apple trees, flowers, shade and a home for insects) from a single seed, karma by nature magnifies.
- Just as you cannot get oranges from apple seeds no matter how much you pray or hope, you cannot experience the effects of actions you did not do.
- Just as your apple seeds will sprout unless burnt by the bushfire of anger or the fire of wisdom realizing emptiness, karma seed do not perish.



*“Choose your seeds wisely
Know your seeds”*

(Simon Checker and Ryan Shields)

Four important points concerning Karma

It is important to recollect the qualities of the Buddha before we investigate and study the teachings on karma so that we have some basis of belief in karmic cause and effect.

(P2/25 GTT)

The three types of inference are (1) the inference of conviction, (2) inference through the power of the fact and (3) the inference of renown. (32/p45 GTT)

- 1) Of the three types of objects, obvious, hidden and extremely hidden, karma and its effects are extremely hidden and can only be realized by ordinary people through the inference of conviction.
- 2) An example of
 - a. An obvious object is the color blue apprehended by an eye consciousness and
 - b. An example of a hidden object is the emptiness of inherent existence of the color blue. (32/p45 GTT)

Reasons of conviction that are convincing reasons which have arisen through inference need to be used to realise karma and its effects which are an extremely hidden object.

- 1) This means we must first realize that the teachings of the four noble truths are flawless.
- 2) This will lead to the acceptance that the teacher of these four noble truths is flawless.
- 3) From having realized that the teacher is flawless you can infer that the more subtle and obscure teachings concerning karma and its effects are also without flaws. (32/p46 GTT)

The faith of conviction refers to Buddha's presentation of karmic cause and effect which states that from acting virtuously pleasant results appear and from acting non-virtuously come unpleasant results. (P2/25 GTT)

The first part of reflecting on karma and its effects has four important points. These four points are (P4/25 GTT)

1. The certainty of karma
2. The magnification of karma
3. Not experiencing the effect of actions that you did not do
4. The actions you have done do not perish

An outline we could use to demonstrate the certainty of karma is that (P4-6/25 GTT)

1. All pleasure and happiness is necessarily the effect of the virtue which is its cause.
 - In a general way the happiness of being wealthy is the result of virtue however it is specifically the result of its cause generosity and not the result of some other virtue like patience. It is important to include

- ‘which is its cause’ to show that effects arise in dependence upon specific compatible causes. (P5/25 GTT)
2. The effects of happiness and suffering arise from compatible causes.
 - All sufferings in the sense of painful feelings are the effect of previously accumulated non-virtuous karma which is its cause.
 - The effects of happiness and suffering do not arise from incompatible causes.
 - i. The meaning of the analogy that “you will not obtain medicinal fruit from the seed of a poisonous tree and you will not obtain poisonous fruit from the seeds of a medicinal tree” is that karmic cause and effect is non-deceptive. The analogy demonstrates that karmic actions produce effects of a similar type and that it is impossible for a karmic seed to produce an effect of dissimilar type. Actions of virtue do not produce suffering, they produce happiness; similarly medicinal seeds do not produce poisonous fruit, they produce medicinal fruit. (P5-6/25 GTT)
 - ii. It is impossible for pleasure and happiness to be the effect of non-virtuous karmic causes.
 3. The effects of happiness and suffering do not occur in the absence of causes.
 4. Understanding karmic cause and effect is the foundation of all virtue.

It is important to be careful with even small karmic infractions because small karmic actions of non-virtue can result in producing many effects of immense suffering. (P7 GTT) (P22 SOPA)

One single negative action can be the basis for many faults because internal causation involves a magnification of effect that is larger than that found in external causation. (P7 GTT)

When we are unhappy because we do not get what we want, when we experience what we do not want or lose what we treasure most; these are all important times to recollect that we would not experience these effects without first having created their causes.

- When we experience unpleasant results or obstacles we should remember that these results are the effects of negative karma that we created in the past and if we wish to be free of such suffering in the future we need to confess and purify the causes of non-virtue and restrain oneself from acting in ways that cause future problems and suffering. (P11/25 GTT)
- When we experience pleasant results we should remember that these results are the effects of virtuous karma that we created in the past and that if we want to continue to experience happiness we need to accumulate more virtue.

Virtuous and non-virtuous seeds do not go to waste because their potential will never be lost until it ripens and bears fruit. The only thing that can prevent them ripening is destroying the karmic seed by means of an antidote. It is possible to eliminate the negative seeds with the wisdom of emptiness or with the four opponent powers. Virtuous seeds can be eliminated with anger. (P33 vol 2 SOPA) (P12/25 GTT)

1. In summary the four points mean that the definiteness of karma is similar to cause and effect in the external environment. Just as fruit can only come from the seed of a plant of a similar type and it is impossible to get a peach from an apple seed, the results we experience come from karma or a substantial cause of a similar type- positive results from positive causes, negative results from negative causes, etc.
2. As for the increasing nature of karma: Just as we see many large fruit come from what was initially a singular small seed, even if a karmic virtue or non-virtue is minor, it is possible that a great experience of pleasure or suffering might arise from it.
3. As for not experiencing the result of actions we have not committed: As a substantial cause is required for a result to be produced, if there is no substantial cause, it is impossible for a result to be produced. Similarly, in order for us to experience internal results- happiness and suffering- we must have the substantial cause for them in our continuum. If we lack that substantial cause, it'd be impossible for either pleasure or suffering to be produced.
4. As for karma once accumulated not going to waste: As internal seeds or karma are linked to the mental continuum, unless one confesses and purifies prior acts, the accumulated karma or internal seed does not go to waste for no reason and is certain to produce a result at some point in the future. (3 Principal Aspects Exam GTT)

When all of our actions are compatible with the Buddha's teaching the work of a day is the same as the work of a lifetime and the work is to act in accordance with the teachings of cause and effect. (29/3 GTT)

Our future depends entirely on the actions that we take now. If we cannot attain enlightenment in this life we must at least create a situation to be able to continue practice in the future. (SOPA 2/p132)

The reflection on the teachings on karma and its effects can bring about feelings of unease and worry. We are advised to appreciate that while we have this life we should focus on confessing and purifying past negativities while retaining a sense of happiness and joy at our present good fortune.

Paths of karmic action

The practice of ethical discipline in which the ten non-virtues are eliminated is the foundation for attaining all practitioners' goals because without it there is no way to accomplish either high status or the definite good of liberation or Buddhahood. (P42 SOPA 2)

The ten paths of non-virtuous action are the three of body, four of speech and three of mind. (P218-27 LRCM 1)

- The three non-virtuous physical paths are
 1. Killing
 2. Stealing and
 3. Sexual misconduct
- And the four non-virtuous verbal paths are
 4. Lying
 5. Divisive speech
 6. Offensive speech
 7. Senseless speech
- While the three non-virtuous mental paths are
 8. Covetousness
 9. Malice and
 10. Wrong Views

The ten paths of virtuous action are also the three of body, four of speech and three of mind. (P238-39 LRCM 1)

- The three virtuous physical paths are
 1. Giving up killing
 2. Giving up stealing
 3. Giving up stealing
- And the four virtuous verbal paths are
 1. Giving up Lying
 2. Giving up Divisive speech
 3. Giving up Offensive speech
 4. Giving up Senseless speech
- While the three virtuous mental paths are
 1. Giving up Covetousness
 2. Giving up Malice
 3. Giving up Wrong Views

All actions of the three doors are not included within these three; however these ten actions of non-virtue are the most obvious and form the foundation of all non-virtue and

suffering while their opposites are the foundation of all virtue and happiness. (P216-17 LRCM 1)

According to the Vinaya the seven non-virtues of body and speech are both paths of action and actions while the three non-virtuous mental activities are paths of action but not actions. (28/P46 GTT)

What does it mean to say that something is a path of action? A karmic path is the object or actualization of an intention.

According to the Vinaya a path of action is the cause or the source, or creator of karma; it is not itself the intention, but is the underlying cause from which an intention arises (2/P72 SOPA)

- According to the three higher schools to say that something is an action means that it is the omnipresent mental factor of intention. (28/P47 GTT)

Each action has four main branches of a

1. Basis
2. Attitude (Thought)
 - There are two other aspects that can be included under 'Attitude' and these are perception (discrimination) and (obscuring) affliction (disturbing emotions). (P218 LRCM 1) (P47 SOPA)
3. Performance (Actual action) and
4. Culmination (Conclusion)

In relation to the non-virtuous physical action of stealing the branches of the

1. Basis must be an object that is owned by others – an object they consider to be their own, which they think of as mine and the
2. Perception at the time of stealing must be unmistakable.
 - (a) The motivation is the intention to take something that belongs to someone else without permission. It involves the desire to possess an object for yourself, knowing that it belongs to another and knowing that it was not given to you.
 - (b) The obscuring affliction underlying the action will be one of the three poisons, desire, hostility or ignorance. (P50 SOPA 2)
3. The stealing can be performed by you or you can cause someone else to do it and
4. The culmination of the action is accomplished when the object is moved from one place to another and thought of "Now I have it" arises in the mind of the thief. (P49-51 SOPA 2)

If the non-virtuous physical action of stealing action is not completed karma is still created, a fault is still incurred although the result will not be so heavy.

The four aspects as they apply to a virtuous path of action that gives up stealing are the

1. Basis which is the property of another
2. The attitude is to avoid the action of taking that which has not been given because you recognize its faults and
3. The performance is to restrain yourself from taking that which has not been given
4. The culmination of the action is the bodily act of completely accomplishing the restraint of that action. If you were taking the vow to restrain yourself from stealing and repeated the vow after the master whereby you promise to restrain yourself from taking that which has not been given, that would be the physical action of completing the correct restraint. (30/P17 GTT)

The culmination as it applies to a path of action that gives up stealing is the bodily act of completely accomplishing the restraint of that action. (SOPA 2/P104)

During this life there is an important need for culmination in relation to our accumulation of virtue. It is important to complete a full virtuous path of action so that we accrue the full benefit of our virtue.

'Culmination' is necessary for an action to be complete otherwise the fullness of the karma will not be adequate to project rebirth into a higher or lower realm. (P26/26 GTT)

Four branches & their effects

This teaching falls under ‘The actual training of thought for a person of small capacity’

ii) Relying on the means for achieving happiness in the next life

b’ Developing the faith of conviction that is the root of all temporary happiness and certain goodness

1’ reflecting on karma and its effects in general

(i) The actual paths of the ten non-virtuous actions

The purpose of meditation is to gain conviction in karma and its effects so that you might restrain the mind from non-virtue and adopt virtue. This will stop the causes of miserable rebirths and ultimately lead you to state of complete enlightenment.

KILLING

4 Branches

1. Basis – any other living being

2. Attitude –

- *Perception* – Unmistaken -eg. if you mean to kill a cockroach but instead kill an ant a complete karma is not established
- *Motivation* – a state of mind in which you fully intend to kill a living being
- *Affliction* – any of the three poisons: desirous attachment, anger, ignorance

3. Performance – the performance by you or someone you enlist through any means, such as poison, weapons, magic.

4. Culmination – the death of another on account of the performance

Effects of killing

- *Fruitional effects* - rebirth in lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* - habitual desire to kill and harm others
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* - rebirth in human realm with a short life and considerable ill-health and disease
- *Environmental effects* - rebirth in a violent place with many problems like wars and revolutions. Food, drink and medicine have little beneficial effect in sustaining your body.

STEALING

4 Branches

1. Basis – anything owned by another

2. Attitude -

- *Perception* – unmistakable -eg. Stealing from Jane while thinking it belongs to John does not establish a complete negative karma in relation to either.
- *Motivation* – the desire to take something that hasn’t been given to you
- *Affliction* – attachment, anger or ignorance

3. Performance – you or someone you enlist (such as your accountant) robbing by force or theft or by subterfuge

4. Culmination – thinking that you have acquired it

Effects of stealing

- *Fruitional effects* - rebirth in lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* – a natural inclination to steal
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* – the lack of wealth and resources. If you gain things they are stolen, borrowed or lost
- *Environmental effects* – a rebirth in a barren place, where crops do not grow, or are destroyed and business fails

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

4 Branches

1. Basis – inappropriate person, body part, place or time
2. Attitude –
 - *Perception* – unmistakable - you must recognize the object without mistake
 - *Motivation* – the desire to have intercourse
 - *Affliction* – attachment, anger or ignorance
3. Performance – the instigation of the act
4. Culmination – the feeling of bliss upon union of the sex organs

Effects of sexual misconduct

- *Fruitional effects* – a rebirth in a lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* – a tendency to be unfaithful
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* - being unable to sustain relationships and being quickly separated from spouses, friends, family and workers
- *Environmental effects* – to live in a dirty environment

LYING

4 Branches

1. Basis – what is seen, heard, distinguished, cognized, or what was not seen, heard, etc. You must be speaking to a being that is going to understand what you are saying in human speech.
2. Attitude –
 - *Perception* – misrepresenting what you know to be so or not so
 - *Motivation* – fully intend to deceive someone
 - *Affliction* – attachment, anger or ignorance
3. Performance – indicating something through speaking, choosing not to speak or through gesture
4. Culmination – when someone else understands and believes your lie

Effects of lying

- *Fruitional effects* – a rebirth in lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* – the tendency to habitually deceive others
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* - others not believing you whether you are telling the truth or not
- *Environmental effects* - is to live amongst cheats and con-men where there is no-one you can trust

DIVISIVE SPEECH

Branches

1. Basis – two or more people who share a relationship. Could be friends, relatives, married couple, social group, monastic community
2. Attitude –
 - *Perception* – unmistakable recognition of parties involved and their relationship
 - *Motivation* – a state of mind in which you fully intend to cause disunity or maintain disunity that already exists.
 - *Affliction* – attachment, anger or ignorance
3. Performance – undertaking to cause a separation between friends or to prevent reconciliation between enemies. Words spoken could be true or untrue
4. Culmination – when other parties understand and believe what you tell them.

Effects of divisive speech

- *Fruitional effects* - rebirth in lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* - tendency to cause disunity
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* - being lonely and having few friends, followers or workers. You find it difficult to develop smooth relationships
- *Environmental effects* - live in rugged, inhospitable, uneven environment where communication is difficult

OFFENSIVE SPEECH

4 Branches

1. Basis – a sentient being in whom you can engender hostility
2. Attitude –
 - *Perception* – correctly identifying the object to be insulted
 - *Motivation* – desire to speak in an offensive manner
 - *Affliction* – any of the three poisons
3. Performance – to express something pleasant or unpleasant, true or untrue, about the deficiencies of someone else's family lineage, body, ethics, or behaviour
4. Culmination – the speaking or another's understanding of what was said

Effects of offensive speech

- *Fruitional effects* – a rebirth in lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* - tendency to be critical and hurtful
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* - others being abusive towards you and speaking badly about you. When you try to be pleasant others will interpret it negatively
- *Environmental effects* - live in an uncomfortable environment where there are stinging nettles, sharp rocks and thorns that tear at your flesh whenever you move about.

SENSELESS SPEECH

4 Branches

1. Basis – speech about something that isn't meaningful
2. Attitude –
 - *Perception* – viewing whatever you wish to say as significant, important and meaningful even though it is not
 - *Motivation* – a state of mind in which you fully intend to gossip and indulge in senseless speech
 - *Affliction* – attachment, anger, or ignorance
3. Performance – to undertake the speaking of senseless speech
4. Culmination – finishing an utterance of senseless speech

Effects of senseless speech

- *Fruitional effects* - rebirth in a lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* - to be inclined to talk continuously and you cannot wait to fill any quiet moment with the sound of your voice
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* - that others do not take your speech seriously or listen to anything you say
- *Environmental effects* - live in a place where crops do not grow properly, the rain comes at the wrong time, and activities are not successful.

COVETOUSNESS

4 Branches

1. Basis – anything belonging to another be it a possession or internal quality
2. Attitude –
 - *Perception* – unmistakable
 - *Motivation* – having the clear desire to own the subject
 - *Affliction* – attachment, anger or ignorance
3. Performance – striving at the purpose you've contemplated
4. Culmination – thinking 'May it be mine'

Effects of covetousness

- *Fruitional effects* - rebirth in lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* - continuously dissatisfied and grasping
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* - not achieving your wishes and never getting what you want
- *Environmental effects* - rebirth in place where there are poor crops and where material resources are easily destroyed or lost.

MALICE

4 Branches

1. Basis – a living being who would be hurt if your harmful thought were acted out
2. Attitude –
 - *Perception* – unmistakable
 - *Motivation* – the desire to do things like strike others or thinking how well it would be if they were harmed, etc.
 - *Affliction* – usually anger
3. Performance – having that thought
4. Culmination – when your wish to harm the object increases to the extent that you make a definite decision to harm the object

Effects of malice

- *Fruitional effects* - rebirth in a lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* – the tendency to hurt others
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* – unfounded fear and to panic easily
- *Environmental effects* - rebirth in a violent place with war and fearful plagues

WRONG VIEW

4 Branches

- 1 Basis – Existent objects. Something that is true and always the case e.g. laws of karma, 4 Noble Truths, Three Jewels
2. Attitude –
 - *Perception* – Perceiving to be true the meaning of a mistaken denial of the existence of an existent object
 - *Motivation* – The desire to deny the existence of an existent object
 - *Affliction* – ignorance is the principal
3. Performance – the initiation of such an attitude
- 4 Culmination – certainty that you have denied something

Effects of wrong view

- *Fruitional effects* – a rebirth in a lower realm
- *Causally concordant behavioral effects* – You would have a predominance of confusion and have deceitful behavior.
- *Causally concordant experiential effects* - you would have stubborn ignorance and find it difficult to gain realizations' and to develop your understanding.
- *Environmental effects* – rebirth in a place of difficulty, where e.g. you go to a well and find the water is exhausted; and when you plant crops they fail

When all of our actions are compatible with the Buddha's teaching, the work of a day is the same as the work of a lifetime and the work is to act in accordance with the teachings of cause and effect. (29/3 GTT)

The practice of ethical discipline in which the ten non-virtues are eliminated is the foundation for attaining all practitioners' goals. Without it there is no way to accomplish either high status or the definite good of liberation or Buddhahood. (P42 SOPA 2)

Our future depends entirely on the actions that we take now.

Karmic strength & weight

We previously meditated to gain conviction in karma and its effects so that we might restrain the mind from non-virtue and adopt virtue. This was to stop the causes of miserable rebirths and ultimately lead us to a state of complete enlightenment.

1. We heard that karma was certain, it magnified, when it was without cause its non-experience and its non-perishing quality.
2. We also heard of the ten virtuous and ten non-virtuous actions and saw that each action had four branches called attitude, basis, performance and culmination.

We will now examine the strength and weight of karmic actions and their effect on positive and negative outcomes. We can use this new knowledge to avoid adding strength to actions that cause harm to oneself and others and strengthen only actions that are useful, because we are only reborn in the higher or lower realms of cyclic existence through the strength and weight of the good and bad actions that we previously accumulated.

We will first discuss and then meditate on the various factors that provide strength and weight to karmic actions. Cyclic-existence is produced by actions, and consists entirely of the effects of actions; there is nothing else that consigns us to the higher or the lower realms. Where we are now is not a chance occurrence.

Actions are always performed with a certain amount of mental power and the strength of the power imbues the weight of the action, thus affecting the result. The strength of an actions path is dependent upon four factors called the recipient, the object, the support, and the attitude.

1. Saying that the **recipient** contributes to the strength of an action means that an action becomes powerful in relation to the object or recipient towards whom it is directed. The most powerful recipients are the guru, the triple gem, those who have high realizations, and our parents. These recipients are found within the three fields of enlightenment, merit and mercy.
2. To say that the **object** contributes to the strength of an action means that an action becomes powerful and strong in relation to the activity itself. Activities may be of a material or immaterial nature. Among the giving of gifts to living beings, the gift of the teachings is vastly superior to the gift of material things. Among the offerings to the Buddhas, the offering of practice is vastly superior to the offering of material things.
3. Saying that the **support** contributes to the strength of an action means that an action becomes powerful and strong dependent on knowledge and ethics. If we

hold vows, our practice and the actions we do become much more powerful. Non-virtues are light for the knowledgeable who regret their former non-virtuous actions and then restrain themselves from future non-virtue. They do not conceal their sins and do virtuous actions as remedies for those non-virtuous actions.

4. To say that the attitude contributes to the strength of an action means that an action becomes powerful and strong in relation to the way we think of the activity as we approach it, carry it out, and conclude it. The attitude has four parts which include its path, interest, goal and duration.

The weight of any action is dependent upon five factors called performance, attitude, no antidote, perversity, and basis. If no opposing condition or cause obstructs the five factors of a heavy negative action, the effect of suffering is certain to be experienced.

The first four factors in which karma becomes heavy have to do with the way the action is performed.

1. The performance of any negative action has greater gravity when we engage in it with joy and satisfaction, when we praise ourselves or someone else, when we do the action repeatedly or constantly and when we perform it avidly and purposely.
2. Any negative action becomes heavier if it is performed under the influence of intense anger, attachment or ignorance. If we act out of intense hatred or intense desire, that karma will be heavier because of the attitude.
3. When we perform a negative action without a countervailing activity to mitigate its power, the suffering effect is heavier. With no antidote like a vow or the application of the mental factors of regret, embarrassment or shame, and without knowledge of the mundane or the supra-mundane paths the weight of the negative karma will be increased.
4. Perversity refers to actions that are based on perverted views, distorted concepts of spiritual practice leading us to believe that doing harm is actually beneficial. And so karma is heavy when adhering to wrong views.

The previous four ways in which karma becomes heavy had to do with the way the action was performed by the agent; now we will hear how karma becomes heavier because of the object of the action.

5. In general, the gravity of the karma will increase in relation to the size of the object, the value of the object and the place where the object is. Whether the object is within the fields of enlightenment, merit, or mercy, and whether the object is performed by the body, speech or mind also has a bearing on the weight.

To illustrate a meditation with the five factors that determine the gravity of an action we can examine the non-virtuous act of stealing.

Imagine belonging to a religious group and stealing from them many valuable texts that were purchased from the donations of the poor. Imagine that your intention is to donate the cash gain to a charity to reduce your taxable income and to increase your standing in the community. Imagine being reborn with the aggregates of a hungry ghost. Then consider the environmental effects and the causally concordant effects of your theft. Imagine that all your wealth is stolen and no one has any sympathy or empathy for your plight. Imagine never being satisfied with what you possess and then constantly losing your possessions.

If you steal a large quantity, or when what you steal is very valuable, fine, or precious the weight of the negative karmic path increases. When your actions betray the trust of others who have confidence in you, or when you steal from people who are in difficulty or from those attempting a path of spiritual practice, or from a stupa; the non-virtuous action is always heavier and if it is not purified the effect will also be heavy.

Stealing is heavier than adultery, but not as heavy as killing. And if you were to do it constantly with attachment, the weight of the karmic path would increase more so.

There are other presentations explaining how karma becomes heavy. In the *Levels of Yogic Deeds* Asanga presents six factors that contribute to the gravity of karma while Nagarjuna in his *Friendly letter to the King* mentions five ways in which both negative and positive actions become great.

Understanding how these factors affect the strength and weight of karma is important, because it shows us how to establish the habit patterns we need to become part of our mind. If we want positive habit patterns, and thus positive responses in relation to the circumstances of life, we should practice accumulating strong, positive karmas through constant repetition, intensity of motivation and so on. We should be careful not to repeat negative actions but if we do, we should weaken its effect through sincere regret.

If we want to practice dharma authentically we should give priority to choosing what we do in accordance with our knowledge of karmic cause and effect. Our view and our actions should be cultivated side by side. At all times, we should examine the effects of positive and negative actions, and try to avoid or weaken all those that cause suffering and strengthen all those that cause happiness. We will only experience the results of our own actions and will only reap what we sow.

If we have in the back of our mind an understanding and trust in the cause and effect of karma it will influence all our choices and lead us to focus our life on worthwhile goals. Once we are established on the path of the wise, skilful person, all heavy karma can be made light. We will finally have control of our future.

Karmic weight

The five causes that make an action weighty are (2/P73-77 SOPA)

1. The thought (attitude)
2. The action (performance)
 - Joy
 - Praise
 - Elaborate preparation
 - Constancy, avidly
 - Cruel, merciless
 - Against the weak and poor
3. The absence of an antidote
 - Without vows or precepts
 - Without performing meritorious activities
 - Without shame, embarrassment or remorse
 - Without single pointed concentration
 - Without applying emptiness
4. Adhering to wrong views and
5. The object
 - The size
 - Family
 - Close friends
 - Teacher or lama
 - The spiritual community

According to the text *The Levels of Yogic Deeds* actions of a positive or negative nature are weighty in six ways. (2/P80-81 SOPA)

1. Conditioning – the motivational force – the intensity
2. Habituation – regularity – repeatedly – done over a long time
3. Nature – Body & speech diminish in order, mental increase
4. Basis – objects, the three jewels and family
5. Fixation on incompatible features - exclusivity
6. Eradication of unfavorable factors – eliminating non-virtue

The third of these, the Nature means that of the karmas of the body – killing, stealing and sexual misconduct – the first is the heaviest, the second is a little lighter, and the third lighter still. It is the same for the four actions of speech: the first is heavier and they diminish in order. When it comes to the three mental karmas, the last, wrong view is the heaviest, the second is malice and the lightest is covetousness. (2/P80 SOPA)

Stealing is weighty due to its Basis if it involves taking a great deal, or taking good things, stealing from those who trust you, stealing from the lowly, the impoverished, renunciates or other Buddhist practitioners, taking what is highly valued, taking the property of learners, arhats, pratyekabuddhas, the community or stupas. (P228-230 LRCM 1)

Karmic strength

There are four aspects that contribute to the strength of an action and they are (29/5-12 GTT)

1. The recipient
 2. The support
 3. The object and
 4. The attitude
- To say that the recipient contributes to the strength of an action means that an action becomes powerful in relation to the object or recipient towards whom it is directed.
 - To say that the support contributes to the strength of an action means that an action becomes powerful and strong in relation to the person who performs the action.
 - To say that the object contributes to the strength of an action means that an action becomes powerful and strong in relation to the activity itself
 - To say that the attitude contributes to the strength of an action means that an action becomes powerful and strong in relation to the way one thinks of the activity as they approach it, as they carry it out and as it's concluded.

An example of a non-virtuous action that is strengthened with these four aspects in place is the act of stealing. The action of stealing is more powerful when

1. The recipient is a holy person
2. The support is a lay person without vows
3. The object is a dharma object
4. The attitude is one of malice

The actions of someone who is not knowledgeable are stronger than those of someone who is knowledgeable because the first person is much more likely in relation to non-virtue commit actions with all four aspects of recipient, support, object and attitude complete and of those complete actions that person will also have no idea of how to lessen the negative effects of those actions. The person who is not knowledgeable will therefore experience stronger suffering.

- To be knowledgeable in this case means that the person applies their knowledge of karmic cause and effect by practicing restraint towards present non-virtuous activities and by regretting their past non-virtue they confess and purify it. They would then do virtuous actions to remedy the past non-virtue. (29/9 GTT)

We do not need to know whether a being is a bodhisattva in order for the result of our actions to be great. (29/P7 GTT)

Actions made towards the three jewels, gurus, parents, the sangha community, and members of our own class are especially strong because these recipients are especially kind to us (the support). (29/9 GTT)

We need to confess actions like ‘taking that which belongs to the sangha community’ even if we don’t remember ever having done that so that we do not experience the full effect of those actions in either this life or another. (29/P6 GTT)

Karmic Fruitions

Some of the conditions which will affect the order of the ripening of karma are their weight, nearness and so forth, motivation, virtue and whether practices of purification have been accomplished.

The karmas that will ripen first are (31/p37 GTT)

1. Those that are weighty
2. Those that are near
3. Those to which you are habituated and
4. Those you did earliest and

Projecting karma is what projects the fruition; it determines the main result (SOPA 2/P109-10)

- The process by which we accumulate projecting karma is through accumulating a complete path of action whereby the basis, attitude, performance and culmination are complete.

According to the *Levels of Yogic Deeds* the fruition effects of a non-virtuous action manifest in a great form, a medium form or a light form (30/P14 GTT)

- If it is in a great form you might be reborn with the aggregates of a denizen of the hell realms.
- If it is in a medium form you might be reborn with the aggregates of a hungry ghost
- If it is in a light form you might be reborn with the aggregates of an animal.

According to the lower schools an example of karma that will ripen in the next lifetime would be the non-virtuous fruition effect following any of the five heinous crimes. The projecting karma of committing any of the five heinous crimes is rebirth in the aggregates of a hell realm denizen according to the lower schools. (31/p36 GTT)

Completing karma is what determines the desirable or undesirable nature of experience once one is born. (SOPA 2/P110)

- Examples of
 1. The results of non-virtuous projecting karma with virtuous completing karma are to be born with the aggregates of a lower realm being, an animal, hungry ghost or hell denizen and to experience a relatively comfortable life. (SOPA 2/P111)
 2. The results of virtuous projecting karma with non-virtuous completing karma are to be born with the aggregates of a higher realm being, a human or deva and to experience various forms of discomfort and unhappiness in that life. (SOPA 2/P111)

The four possibilities outlined by Asanga in the Compendium of Knowledge of how actions project either a single body or many bodies are (SOPA 2/P112)

1. There is karma in which one action projects one body for instance one rebirth (in the sense of a single life) (30/P21 GTT)
2. There is karma in which one action projects many bodies for instance the intermediate state and then the human life or else by doing a single full-length prostration to a stupa that contains the relics of a Tathagata, the merit of each grain of ground covered by the body projects a seed to be reborn as a universal emperor. (30/P21 GTT)
3. There is karma in which many actions project one body for instance it might happen in the case of some small habitual action that you performed regularly; although each action was not very powerful by itself, by repeating the action over and over again with the same motivation, the karmic potential accumulates and finally produces the same result as one big powerful karma. (SOPA 2/P112) It might also be that a singular karma projects the fruition effect and the other karmas function as the completing effects. (30/P22 GTT)
4. There is karma in which many actions project many bodies for instance many ethical activities result in the fruition effects of many higher realm rebirths.

The difference between causally concordant experiential effects and causally concordant behavioral effects is that

- Causally concordant experiential effects are results that are similar to the past actions that brought about that effect. (SOPA 2/P97) You undergo an experience that corresponds to the experience you caused by your previous action. (SOPA 2/P100) A causally concordant experiential effect of stealing would be the lack resources and those resources you might have would be shared with others while
- Causally concordant behavioral effects are behaviors done as a result of actions habitually performed in a previous lifetime. (SOPA 2/P100) A causally concordant behavioral effect of stealing would be to continue to steal and embezzle in subsequent lives

The environmental effect of stealing is that the supply of crops and vegetables are meager and the area we live in is plagued by harsh conditions like drought or excessive rainfall. (SOPA 2/P101)

Karmas that you are not certain to experience are those which are intentionally done but not accumulated. Some of the types of actions which result in these karmas are (SOPA 2/P113)

1. What is done in dream
2. What is done unknowingly
3. What is done unconsciously
4. What is done neither with intensity nor continuously
5. What is done erroneously
6. What is done forgetfully
7. What is done unwillingly

8. Actions which by nature are ethically neutral
9. Those actions that have been cleared away by regret
10. Those actions that have been cleared away by means of an antidote

The possibilities between karma that is done and karma that is accumulated number four

1. Karma that is done and accumulated is for example having the motivation to steal, having the correct perception of the person you plan to rob or the object you wish to steal, and finally you go through the action of stealing.
2. Karma that is done and not accumulated is for example stealing done unwittingly, without knowing you are doing it OR stealing done in a dream
3. Karma that is not done and is accumulated is for instance contemplating the act of stealing, planning it and intending to steal but finally not going through the act of stealing.
 - This combination of karma accumulated but not done does not apply to the three mental karmas of covetousness, malice and wrong view. The mental process that causes an action to be accumulated is the very doing of these mental actions.
4. Karma that is not done and not accumulated is any act whether virtuous or non-virtuous, other than an act of killing. (SOPA 2/p115)

Karmas we will not definitely experience are faults. We need not worry, however we should try to be aware as possible in regard to all karmic causes and their consequences.

The possible fruition effects of virtuous actions are rebirth with the aggregates of

- A human
- A deity of the desire realm (six realms of the devas) or (SOPA 2/P105)
- A deity in one of the two upper realms, the form and formless realm (30/P17 GTT)

There are two different types of results for virtuous actions and they exist on two different levels.

- There are those temporary results that manifest in happiness on the ordinary samsaric level and
- There are the everlasting, highest results of attaining liberation and enlightenment.
 - In every case it is the mind, the attitude, the motivation that determines which goal will be achieved. (SOPA 2/P108)

And so the results of virtue do not indisputably ripen as a fruition effect. Virtuous actions that are not contaminated with grasping at true existence are not causes that result in fruition effects. These uncontaminated actions result in the freedom of the hearer arhat, the solitary Realiser arhat and the omniscience of Buddhahood and these existences are all without the fruitional effect of samsaric aggregates. (30/P18 GTT)

There are no fruition effects for uncontaminated actions because uncontaminated actions do not bring about the effects of rebirth with contaminated aggregates.
Uncontaminated actions are activities conjoined with the wisdom of selflessness. (30/P18 GTT)

Other classifications of karma 1

Some of the conditions which will affect the order of the ripening of karma are their weight and strength, their nearness and so forth; motivation, virtue and whether practices of purification have been accomplished.

The karmas that will ripen first are (SOPA 2/P118-119)

1. Those that are weighty
2. Those that are near
3. Those to which you are habituated and
4. Those you did earliest and

Projecting karma is what projects the fruition; it determines the main result called fruition. (SOPA 2/P109-10)

- The process by which we accumulate projecting karma is through gathering the complete set of conditions of a path of action whereby the basis, attitude, performance and culmination are present.

The four possibilities outlined by Asanga in the Compendium of Knowledge of how actions project either a single body or many bodies are (SOPA 2/P112)

1. There is karma in which one action projects one body; for instance, one rebirth (in the sense of a single life) (30/P21 GTT)
2. There is karma in which one action projects many bodies; for instance, the intermediate state and then a human life.
3. There is karma in which many actions project one body; for instance, it might happen in the case of some small habitual action that you performed regularly; although each action was not very powerful by itself, by repeating the action over and over again with the same motivation, the karmic potential accumulates and finally produces the same result as one big powerful karma. (SOPA 2/P112) It might also be that a singular karma projects the fruition effect and the other karmas function as completing effects. (30/P22 GTT)
4. There is karma in which many actions project many bodies; for instance, many ethical activities result in the fruition effect of many higher realm rebirths.

According to the lower schools, an example of karma that will ripen in the next lifetime is the non-virtuous fruition effect following any of the five heinous crimes. According to these schools, the projecting karma of committing any of the five heinous crimes results in the fruition effect of a rebirth with the aggregates of a hell realm denizen.

According to the *Levels of Yogic Deeds* the fruition effects of a non-virtuous action manifest in a great form, a medium form or a light form (30/P14 GTT)

- If it is in a great form you could be reborn with the aggregates of a denizen of the hell realms.
- If it is in a medium form you could be reborn with the aggregates of a hungry ghost
- If it is in a light form you could be reborn with the aggregates of an animal.

Completing karma is what determines the desirable or undesirable nature of experience once one is born. (SOPA 2/P110)

- Examples of
 1. The results of non-virtuous projecting karma with virtuous completing karma are to be born with the aggregates of a lower realm being, an animal, hungry ghost or hell denizen and to experience a relatively comfortable life. (SOPA 2/P110-111)
 2. The results of virtuous projecting karma with non-virtuous completing karma are to be born with the aggregates of a higher realm being, a human or deva and to experience various forms of discomfort and unhappiness in that life. (SOPA 2/P110-111)

Other classifications of karma 2

Karma whose result you will definitely experience is that consciously done and accumulated. Karma whose result you are not certain to experience is that consciously done but not accumulated. What is karma that you have done? It is an action that you have thought about or that you have intentionally set into motion either physically or vocally. (SOPA 2/P113)

Karmas that you are not certain to experience are those which are consciously done but not accumulated. Some of the types of karmas that you do not accumulate are the following ten (SOPA 2/P113)

1. What is done during a dream
2. What is done unknowingly
3. What is done unconsciously
4. What is done neither with intensity nor continuously
5. What is done erroneously
6. What is done forgetfully
7. What is done unwillingly
8. Actions which by nature are ethically neutral
9. Those actions that have been cleared away by regret
10. Those actions that have been cleared away by means of an antidote

The possibilities between karma that is done and karma that is accumulated number four

1. Karma that is done and accumulated is for example; having the motivation to steal, having the correct perception of the person you plan to rob or the object you wish to steal, and finally you go through the action of stealing.
2. Karma that is done and not accumulated is for example stealing done unwittingly, without knowing you are doing it OR stealing done in a dream
3. Karma that is not done and is accumulated is for instance contemplating the act of stealing, planning it and intending to steal but finally not going through the act of stealing.
 - This combination of karma accumulated but not done does not apply to the three mental karmas of covetousness, malice and wrong view. The mental process that causes an action to be accumulated is the very doing of these mental actions.
4. Karma that is not done and not accumulated is any act whether virtuous or non-virtuous. (SOPA 2/p113-115)

Karmic fruitions & virtue

Fruitions of a fully qualified body and mind to practice dharma

Each of these 8 is a fully ripened result of positive karma and each provides particular circumstances conducive to the development of our dharma practice.

Attribute	Benefit	Cause
Long life	Will have enough time to gain full realization of Dharma & impart this to others	Saving lives of others, not harming them, nursing the sick
Beauty	Beautiful form, which enables you to attract others to you & Dharma you impart. Makes it easy for others to believe in you and develop faith	Practicing patience, offering flowers & light to buddhas. Painting statues & images of buddhas
Lineage	Views will be widely respected, people carry out your instructions without disregard	Due to overcoming pride and being respectful to Gurus and other beings
Power	Your wealth allows you to support others with acts of generosity. Allows you to win trust, love and respect so that you can ripen beings minds with the Dharma	Generosity to 3 Jewels and other beings & rejoicing in generosity of others
Influential speech	You will be effective in removing the delusions & obstacles of others & be able to show them correct view. Your speech will be source of happiness & comfort to others	Avoiding the four non-virtues of speech & being mindful of effect of your speech on others
Reputation	Others will quickly & easily follow your advice & instructions & not act in a way contrary to them	Making offerings and respecting powerful objects such as one's guru, parents etc and practicing perseverance, mindfulness & concentration
Freedom and independence of a Male birth	Being born in this situation reduces interferences & obstacles to your practice. Your opportunities to practice and help others increases	Admiring those who have it and helping others to gain freedom & independence
Strength	<u>Strong mind</u> : gives you determination to do whatever is necessary to benefit other living beings & enables you to develop wisdom and clairvoyance quickly. <u>Strong body</u> : enables you to undergo any hardship & austerity in following your guru's instructions for Dharma practice & you will have fewer interruptions caused by illness.	<u>Strong mind</u> : Helping others to overcome their mental unhappiness & helping them gain patience, concentration and wisdom <u>Strong body</u> : doing things others are incapable of doing, giving others food, drink & medicine to recover their strength, not physically damaging others.

PURIFICATION

1. Of the three types of objects, obvious, hidden and extremely hidden, what are karma and its effects? *Of the three types of objects, karma and its effects are both hidden and extremely hidden phenomena. Slightly hidden phenomena are those that can be inferred through a process of reasoning while very obscure phenomena, which remain beyond ordinary direct perception and logical inference are established only on the basis of another's testimony and on scriptural authority.* **HHDL World of Tibetan Buddhism p47**
2. What are the three types of inference? *The three types of inference are (1) the inference of conviction, (2) inference through the power of the fact and (3) the inference of renown.* **M1d32p45**
3. What kind of inference is used to realize karma and its effects? *Because karma and its effects can be both slightly and extremely hidden objects, they can be realized through either the inference of conviction or the inference of renown.* **M1d32p45; HHDL World of Tibetan Buddhism p47**
4. 7. What reasons can be used to realize this extremely hidden object, karma, and its effects? *Both the inference of renown and convincing reasons which have arisen through inference can be used to realize karma and its effects.*
 - 1) *This means we must first realize that the teachings of the four noble truths are flawless.*
 - 2) *This will lead to the acceptance that the teacher of these four noble truths is flawless.*
 - 3) *From having realized that the teacher is flawless you can infer that the more subtle and obscure teachings concerning karma and its effects are also without flaws.* **M1d32p46**
5. In the title 'Developing the faith of conviction that is the root of all temporary happiness and certain good', what is the 'faith of conviction' referred to? *The 'faith of conviction' refers to Buddha's presentation of karmic cause and effect which states that from acting virtuously pleasant results appear and from acting non-virtuously come unpleasant results.* **M1d25p2**
6. Does the understanding of emptiness in any way contradict or obstruct the understanding of karma and its effects? *The understanding of emptiness in no way contradicts or obstructs the understanding of karma and its effects. Rather you will comprehend that the meaning of emptiness is the meaning of dependent arising, and this understanding can only assist you in becoming certain about karma and its effects* **M1d32p46**

7. What is the main emphasis of the teaching: 'How you engage in virtue and turn away from non-virtue after you have reflected on karma and its effects in general and in detail.'? *The main emphasis of the teaching 'How you engage in virtue and turn away from non-virtue after you have reflected on karma and its effects in general and in detail' is restraint and confession using the four opponent powers.* **M1d32p44**
8. The reflection on the teachings on karma and its effects can bring about feelings of unease and worry. How are we advised to think in order to deal with this? *We are advised to appreciate that while we have this life we should focus on confessing and purifying past negativities while retaining a sense of happiness and joy at our present good fortune.* **M1d32p51**
9. How are we taught to guard the mind? *We are to guard the mind with an introspective awareness that uses the two mental factors vigilance and mindfulness. When the mind moves in a negative direction vigilantly it must be brought back and mindfully placed upon a neutral or positive object.* **M1d32p47**
10. There is a differentiation made between the purification of root downfalls (infractions) and sins or negativities. Explain the purification of each of these. *There is a differentiation made between the purification of root downfalls which are called infractions and negativities which are referred to as sins. The root downfalls which are called infractions are purified by acting in accordance with the class of texts in which those vows are taught. You might engage in a type of ritual to restore the broken vow although there are other specific practices taught too.* **M2d33p2** *The negativities called sins are purified by engaging in the practice of the four opponent powers of repudiation, applying remedies, turning away and the foundation.* **M2d33p2**
11. Explain the process in relation to the negative action of killing done by an ordained person. *When an ordained person performs the negative action of killing a human being, they incur both a root downfall and negativity. They incur the root downfall because they have broken the vow in which they promised to restrain themselves from taking life and they incur the natural negativity of taking life.* **M2d33p3**
12. Although it is said that the sin and the infraction are a single entity how is it possible that the person can have purified the sin and yet not have purified the infraction? *Although it's said that the negativity and the infraction are a single entity it is possible to purify the negativity and not the infraction by engaging in practice using the four opponent powers. This is demonstrated by analogy.*
 - *An iron poker kept on the hot coals of a fire for a long time becomes so hot that the fire and the iron become a single entity. If you placed the hot iron poker in water the fire would cease but the iron poker would remain.*
 - *The purification of the four opponent powers renders the negative seed produced by killing incapable of producing a fully ripened effect so*

that the negative result is not experienced yet the infraction remains.

M2d33p3

13. When Kamalashila said that ‘there is nothing which cannot be purified’ to what must he have been referring? *Kamalashila was saying that all negativities could be purified using the four opponent powers though infractions cannot be included using that specific method.* **M2d33p3**
14. From which school do the lay persons’ vows come? *The lay persons’ vows are found within the scriptures of the Great Exposition system of tenets. This knowledge is relevant for us because they show us what the behavioral guidelines are and what it means to commit to those vows.* **M2d33p4**
15. What are the four opponent powers, as presented in the *Sutra Giving the Four Teachings*? *The four opponent powers, as presented in the Sutra Giving the Four Teachings are*
 - 1) *The power of repudiation*
 - 2) *The power of applying remedies.*
 - 3) *The power of turning away from faults.*
 - 4) *The power of the foundation* **M2d33p4**
16. Explain each of the 4 opponent powers briefly. 1) Eradication: *Feel great regret for having done non-virtue since beginningless time, by recalling the fruitional, causally concordant & environmental effects of them. Use the confession in the Sutra of Golden Light or the Confession of Moral Downfalls.* 2) Applying remedies: *such as reading or studying, receiving oral transmission of Sutras; comprehending emptiness; reciting mantras; making images of Buddha; making offerings to an image of Buddha or a stupa; reciting the names of Buddhas and bodhisattvas.* 3) Turning away from faults: *restrain from the ten non virtues with strong conviction not to commit them again. This needs to be a wholehearted restraint to be effective confession.* 4) Foundation: *going for refuge to the three jewels and cultivating the mind of enlightenment* **LRCM1p252-254**
17. Is the order of these four opponent powers fixed or not fixed. *The order of two of the opponent powers is fixed. The power of repudiation will always precede the power of turning away from faults.* **M2d33p5**
18. What exactly does the Tibetan word which is translated as eradication or repudiation mean? *The Tibetan word sun-jin-pa which is translated as eradication or repudiation means ‘knowing a fault to be a fault and knowing the shortcomings of that’* **M2d33p6**
19. What are the six types of remedies outlined in Shantideva’s *Compendium of Trainings*? *In Shantideva’s Compendium of Trainings the six types of remedies are*

- 1) Dependence on the profound sutras which refers to receiving the oral transmission of a sutra like the 'Heart of wisdom Sutra' and retain its meaning and read it.
 - 2) Interest in emptiness which means to comprehend the reality in which there is no inherent self, and which is luminously clear, and to have conviction that the mind is primordially pure.
 - 3) Dependence on recitation means to recite according to rituals the special formulae such as the hundred syllable mantra.
 - 4) Dependence on images means to hear the recitation of and retain the names of Buddhas and bodhisattvas.
 - 5) Dependence on worship means to make a variety of offerings to an image of a Buddha or a stupa.
 - 6) Dependence on names means to hear the recitation of and retain the names of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. **M2d33p6-7**
20. What are a few of the signs that *might* indicate that your practice of purification has been (or is being) successful? *Some of the signs that might indicate that the practice of purification has been or is successful are to see in dreams the following, the*
- 1) Vomiting of bad food
 - 2) Moving through the air
 - 3) Blazing fires
 - 4) Seeing a community of monks or nuns
 - 5) Listening to the teachings **M2d33p7**
21. What is 'subsequent restraint?' *Subsequent restraint means you no longer commit that action again.*
- *It is very important because it means that you have a conviction to no longer engage in the behavior you have reputed, and this conviction relies on the first power of repudiation because that power sees the fault of the behavior and with great contrition knows the shortcoming of such behavior.*
 - *The benefits of such restraint are to destroy all karma, afflictions and obscurations of the teaching created physically, verbally, or mentally by way of the ten non-virtuous actions. Restraint eliminates bad actions that you have created, caused others to create or have rejoiced in others creating. **M2d33p7-8***
22. Sins once purified may not be experienced at all. Give a few ways purified sins are experienced? *A small suffering occurs, such as a headache, instead of a miserable rebirth; or even if you take a miserable rebirth, you do not experience its sufferings; a lengthy suffering effect becomes short or delayed. **LRCM1p254***
23. What are some of the results of purification through the four opponent powers in relation to the effects we may or may not experience? *In relation to the effects, we may or may not experience after cultivating the practice of purifying with the four opponent powers they are,*

- 1) *Small sufferings occur instead of the great sufferings of rebirth in the miserable realms.*
 - 2) *If you are reborn into a miserable realm, you do not experience its suffering.*
 - 3) *A small pain in this present life removes negativity.*
 - 4) *The effect of negativity that you must experience for along time become effects you experience for a short time or not at all* **M2d33p8**
24. What are some of the conditions that might affect this? *Some of the conditions that might affect these results are,*
- 1) *Whether the purifier is of great or little strength*
 - 2) *Whether the remedy is one in which all four opponent powers are complete or incomplete*
 - 3) *Whether the remedy is one in which all four opponent powers are intense or moderate*
 - 4) *Whether the remedy is one in which all four opponent powers are of long or short duration* **M2d33p8**
25. In the light of this teaching on the four opponent powers, how are we to understand the statement that “*karma once created is not wasted?*” *In the light of this teaching on the four opponent powers, we should understand the statement that “karma once created is not wasted” to mean that if we have not cultivated a remedy with the four opponent powers, we will experience the effects of karma because that karma has in no way diminished.* **M2d33p8-9**
26. Why is it important for us to have an attitude of confidence that we are purifying / or have purified our sins? *It important for us to be confident so that purification can actually take place and if we do not have this confidence, they would not be completely purified* **M2d33p9-10**
27. Does the term ‘purified from the root’ mean that the karma is purified completely so that there will be no effect experienced whatsoever? *This term ‘purified from the root’ does not mean that no effect will be experienced whatsoever because we have not found a remedy that destroys the seeds of the afflictions. We have weakened the karma with a contrary condition so that when other conditions do assemble the karma does not come to fruition.* **M2d33p11-12**
28. Explain the way you remedy a sin or negativity as opposed to an infraction, and give an example? *A sin is purified by using the four opponent powers but the infraction needs to be restored in accord with the class of texts that it relates to. For example the sin of breaking a tantric vow is purified by the four opponent powers but the infraction requires self initiation to be restored. For those with vows a sin and infraction are a single entity but are remedied in two different ways.* **M2d1p2-3**

29. What two afflictions most weaken the effects of virtue? *The two afflictions that most often weaken the effects of virtue are wrong views and malice.* [LRCM1p255](#)
30. Negative karma can be completely purified so why is it a problem to break vows? *Although negative karma can be completely purified, the problems from breaking vows compared to non breakage remain because even when the karma is purified, and the vow restored the breakage can greatly delay attaining the higher paths.* [LRCM1p257](#)
31. Is there much of a difference if one has kept a vow purely or if one has incurred a downfall but redressed that by retaking the vows? *Yes, there is a difference, and the difference is of major import. The difference lies in whether there is a hindrance or obstacle to developing higher paths.* [M2d34p15](#)
32. What is the difference and why is it important to strive not to incur downfalls? *The difference is easily demonstrated through this analogy; hands, legs or eyes that have never been injured are better and stronger than those that have been broken or damaged and then restored through medical treatment. Limbs that have been broken are never quite the same as they were before; there is always some residual fault. Although root downfalls can be repaired so that you do experience the suffering result of that infraction in a future life, in this life you will be unable to reach the higher paths.* [Sopa2p170-171](#)
33. How should we understand ‘the causality of the two types of karma’? *‘The causality of the two types of karma’ has two explanations, the first referring to the pure and afflictive classes of phenomena and the second explanation referring to virtuous and non-virtuous karmas and their effects.* [M2d34p17](#)
34. How should this be applied in the practice of the being of small capacity, the being of medium capacity and the being of great capacity?
- 1) *The stages of the path shared with a person of small capacity have as their emphasis the abandonment of non-virtues and the accomplishment of virtue as the means to prevent lower realm rebirth and accomplish rebirth as a human or deity while [M2d34p17](#) the main practices are going for refuge to the three jewels to establish a safe direction and then acting in accordance with the Buddha’s presentation of karmic cause and effect.* [Sopa2p175](#)
 - 2) *The stages of the path shared with a person of medium capacity have as their emphasis the abandonment of everything in the afflictive classes of phenomena and the adoption of the grounds and paths with their results in the pure classes of phenomena so that rebirth anywhere within cyclic existence is prevented and nirvana attained.* [M2d34p18](#)
 - 3) *The stages of the path shared with a person of great capacity have as their emphasis the abandonment of the cognitive obscurations and the adoption of the two bodhicitta’s’ so that they may attain the two bodies of a Buddha thereby bringing forth the welfare of themselves and others.*

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Training in Ethics 1

The training in ethics makes a distracted mind non-distracted.

Ethics weaken the afflictions.

The successful result of training in ethics is the two happy rebirths in the desire realm.

The successful outcome of training in the perfection of ethics is Buddhahood.

The nature of ethics – is the intention to guard; or else, the attitude of abstention.

- Ethical discipline is an attitude of abstention that turns your mind away from harming others and the sources of such harm.
- Ethics are perfected when one is completely accustomed to this attitude

There are four causes for violating ethics. These are

1. Not knowing the precept
2. Carelessness
3. Disrespect
4. and the various afflictions

There are four remedies that can, if applied, prevent the violation of ethics. These are

1. Listening to and understanding the precepts
2. Cultivating trepidation, attentiveness, mindfulness, embarrassment, and shame
3. Cultivating respect for the Buddha, his rules, and other practitioners
4. Examining your mind and applying remedies
 - a. Reflect on the benefits of ethics and develop heartfelt enthusiasm.
 - b. Reflect on the grave consequences of not doing so.
 - c. Try as hard as you can not to violate your ethics.
 - d. Confess any infraction as soon as possible.
 - e. Try to stop afflictions before they manifest.
 - f. If afflictions manifest, do not let them linger, avert them without delay.
 - g. To stop ignorance, meditate on dependent arising.
 - h. To stop anger, familiarize yourself with its faults and cultivate loving kindness.
 - i. To stop attachment, meditate on its faults, the faults of cyclic existence and the unpleasant aspect of what you are attached to and be mindful of death.
 - j. To stop pride, recognize how you have not transcended the afflictions and their ill effects.
 - k. To stop secondary afflictions, learn to view them as enemies and don't take their side.

Training in Ethics 2

Chandrakirti's *Explanation of the Middle Way Commentary* says: It is called ethical discipline because.

1. It does not acquiesce to the afflictions, because it allows no negativities to arise,
2. Because it is coolness since it quells the fire of regret,
3. Or because it is that upon which the excellent rely since it is the cause of happiness.

The purpose for familiarizing oneself with the topic of ethical discipline is to develop and enhance the intention that guards the mind from sources of harm and restrains it from malice towards others.

Cultivating familiarity with ethical discipline begins when we

1. **Remember the pledge** we made to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings which includes endowing them with the ornament of the ethical discipline of a Buddha and to
 - a. Develop the strength of our own ethical discipline so that we do not fall to the lower realms which will delay our accomplishing the welfare of others, and to
 - b. Focus on guarding the mind and
 - c. Restraint
2. Reflect on the **faults** of not safeguarding our ethical discipline.
 - a. Think about the results of non-virtuous actions.
 1. Causally concordant effects
 2. Fruitional results
 3. Environmental effects
 - b. Think about the effects of violating a pledge and engaging in a misdeed
3. Reflect on the **benefits** of safeguarding ethical discipline.
 - a. Your mind-stream develops.
 - b. You develop a compassionate nature.
 - c. You develop the sublime wisdom that overcomes misdeeds.
 - d. It is an ornament that suits anyone and pleases everyone.
 - e. It makes people think favourably of you.
 - f. You gather resources without needing to flatter or work at it
 - g. People pay homage to you.
 - h. People do not gossip about you or your lineage.
 - i. People are naturally kind to you.

The Compendium of Perfections states:

“If you cannot achieve your own welfare with faulty ethical discipline,
Where will you get strength for the welfare of others?
Therefore, those who strive for others’ welfare,
Do not relax their devotion to this.”

Within the lineage of the Perfection Vehicle practices there are three divisions of ethical restraint. They are.

1. The ethical discipline of restraint. This is a vow of individual liberation or a practice of restraint and abstention associated with it. It can also include the Bodhisattva and tantric vows.
2. The ethical discipline of gathering virtue. Focusing on virtues, developing those you haven’t developed, not spoiling those you have developed and increasing both more and more.
3. The ethical discipline of acting for the welfare of sentient beings. Focusing on and accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings in an appropriate and faultless way.

We can practice an ethical discipline endowed with the six supremacies. These six are,

1. Supreme basis – Your motivation is the mind of enlightenment.
2. Supreme things – The code of ethics should be of the highest standard.
3. Supreme aim – The sake of others’ temporary happiness and ultimate good
4. Supreme skill-in-means – Imbued with the wisdom that realises emptiness.
5. Supreme dedication – You dedicate the virtues of restraint to buddhahood.
6. Supreme purity – You stop the emotional and cognitive obscurations.

And we can practice ethical discipline imbued with the six perfections.

1. The ethics of generosity – Whereby we lead others into the practice of ethics.
2. The ethics of ethics – We allow the tendencies that we developed through the practice of ethics to help us practice ethics continuously in future and aspire others to do so
3. The ethics of patience – We are patient with any difficulties we encounter.
4. The ethics of joyous effort - With joy we overcome laziness stopping us from being mindful of ethics.
5. The ethics of meditative stabilization – We are mindful while we act.
6. The ethics of wisdom – We discern how to practice ethics properly and imbue the mind with emptiness of the object of ethics, act of ethics and practitioner of ethics.