

CHAGDUD RINPOCHE'S 37 POINTS OF PRACTICE

To my hosts of students linked to me by previous aspirations and by karma, I, the tulku named Chagdud, an affectionate old man, am inspired by my feelings of love for you to write down this message and send it to you on the steed of the air. Please look upon it.

- 1) Do you invoke the enlightened mindstreams of the rigdzins of the three lineages with faith, respect and longing?
- 2) Do you seek to realize the essence of this hard-won state of freedom and opportunity – as rare as the flowering of an udumwara – through practice of the sacred dharma?
- 3) Do you cut through the bonds of your attachment to all impermanent, illusory phenomena of this life?
- 4) Since the results of your right and wrong actions are infallible, do you seek to practice virtue and to refrain from non-virtue?
- 5) Since there is no possibility of lasting happiness in the cycles of existence, does the sublime attitude of renunciation arise in your mindstream?
- 6) Since hearing the authentic teachings dispels ignorance, do you light the lamp of dharma again and again?
- 7) Since your mindstream will not be tamed solely by hearing the teachings, do you cut through idle speculation with inner contemplation?
- 8) So that you are not bound by the conceptual elaborations of hearing and contemplation, do you practice according to the key points of direct transmission instructions?
- 9) Knowing that cyclic existence lacks any other infallible refuge, do you place the three sublime sources of refuge on the crown of your head?
- 10) In order to find protection from suffering in cyclic existence, do you abandon harming others, and even the thought of doing them harm?
- 11) Since there is no sentient being in the six realms who has not been your own mother or father, do you meditate with equanimity upon the similarity and kindness of all alike?
- 12) When you see all beings who have been your parents continually creating the causes for suffering and being tormented by the results, is your heart moved to compassion?

13) Knowing that the cause of happiness is virtue, when you see happiness in another, do you rejoice from the heart?

14) Given that ephemeral happiness does not bring lasting satisfaction, do you arouse the aspiration to bring about ultimate happiness?

15) Surveying your own mindstream, do you direct your body, speech and mind to the path of virtue?

16) With your gathered virtue and wealth, multiplied through the power of visualization, do you make offerings to perfect the accumulation of merit?

17) In order to uproot the bonds of self-grasping, do you offer your body as a gift to the four kinds of guests?

18) Since the fundamental nature of offering is free of elaboration, do you maintain the view that accomplishes the accumulation of pristine awareness?

19) In order to cast off the heavy load of harmful actions, obscurations, faults and failings, do you confess, using the four powers as your antidotes?

20) Viewing Vajrasattva, the union of intrinsic awareness and emptiness, as identical to your own true nature, do you dissolve subtle habitual patterns in basic space?

21) Do you know that the most sublime, the most profound, spiritual path is the swift path of Guru Yoga?

22) Have you heard that it is better to meditate once upon the lama than to meditate many eons upon hundreds of thousands of deities?

23) Have you achieved such clarity in your visualization that the lama's attributes – colors, implements, ornaments and robes – are vividly and spontaneously apparent, brilliant and distinct?

24) Does the sunlight of your faith and pure samaya shine upon the snow mountain of the lama, who is the reservoir of the snowmelt of blessings?

25) In order to purify the obscurations accumulated from the interdependent actions of body, speech and mind, do you follow the profound path of receiving the four empowerments again and again?

26) In order for the blessings of the mind-to-mind lineage to enter your mindstream, do you blend the lama's mind with your own?

27) Have you met face-to-face the ultimate lama, the union of intrinsic awareness and emptiness, as your own true nature, utterly effortless and spacious?

28) Do you perceive all the phenomena of postmeditation – appearance, sound and thoughts – to be the enlightened form, speech and mind of the lama?

29) Do you understand that although all the phenomena of samsara and nirvana are not your own mind, they do not exist apart from your mind?

30) In order to cut through the dense web of concepts, have you gone through the preliminaries of demolishing the hut of ordinary mind?

31) While engaging in the main practice – the direct encounter with true nature as intrinsic awareness – do you settle effortlessly, spaciously and utterly without contrivance?

32) Without deliberately meditating, yet without distraction, are you familiar with the most majestic and sublime kind of mindfulness?

33) Although your view may be as lofty as the sky itself, are you scrupulous in observing moral choices in your conduct?

34) As for the goal itself, timelessly and spontaneously accomplished, have you cut through the bonds of hope and fear?

35) If you feel that you want to sit, do you dwell in the citadel of primordial being?

36) If you feel that you want to go, do you follow the true path?

37) If you feel you need to do something, do you bring great benefit to beings?

Please examine closely to determine whether these thirty-seven key points apply directly to you and at all times and in all ways. For me, Chagdud, burdened with the weight of my years, this hard-wrought old body, this gnarled tree, weathers storms of unbalanced elements, yet I am not injured. Hordes of demons, an otherwise malevolent bunch, serve me with respect. I have laid the ground for the teachings of the great secrets to develop in the future. If I leave, I am content to be in the presence of my lama, Padma Jungnay. If I stay, I am content to nurture the love of a lama for his students. Whatever I have done, I am happy, a yogin of illusion, who offers this to you in an expansive and cheerful frame of mind. Please look upon this with delight! May it be stamped indelibly in your minds!