

instant, truly able to help others. They are a short cut to enlightenment, and taking them in a formal way strengthens the karma seeds we plant when we struggle to keep our commitments.

མི་ཚོས་ལྷ་མའི་བརྟུན་སྲུབ།

mi chu lamay dzun ma wa,

4) Committing adultery by having sexual relations with someone else's spouse

རང་གི་བྱུང་མིང་མ་ཡིན་པ་ལ་འོག་པར་གཡེམ་པ།

rang gi ume ma yinpa la lokpar yempa

5) Drinking alcohol, or any substance which makes you intoxicated

སྲོས་འགྱུར་གྱི་སྲུབ་ཆང་འཐུང་བ།

nyungyur gyi kuwa chang tungwa

7) How do the layperson vows compare to the vows of a novice monk or nun?

The vow of Sexual Misconduct for a layperson involves not committing adultery, and for a novice monk or nun means complete celibacy.

Vow #7 of the 36, "Speaking a Lie" is the most similar to the layperson vow of lying about your spiritual attainments, but ordained people have far more vows concerning lying. Vows 7 through 9 and 13 through 18 all involve some form of lying for a novice monk or nun.

8) What is the progression of vows? Why might you take so many vows?

You can progress in the level of your commitment from a Lay Person to a Novice Monk or Nun to an Intermediate Nun to a Full Monk or Nun to a Full Monk or Nun with tantric vows (and you can include in this Bodhisattva Vows which strengthen every step, and must be included with the final group). The vows were designed by Enlightened Beings who know exactly what we must give up and what we must take up in order to escape all suffering and become a being who can stand on a billion planets in a single

མཐར་ཐུག་

TARTUK

4) If you divide novice vows into the 13, what are the three additional parts?

- Not making supplications to your preceptor.**
- Giving up the appearance of a lay person.**
- Taking up the appearance of the ordained.**

5) List the 7 vows (out of the 36) which are the most serious to break. These are the transgressions which are similar to a downfall for a full monk or nun.

- 1) "Killing a human or human fetus"
- 2) "Striking something which contains animals"
- 3) "Acting Towards Something Which Contains Animals"
- 4) "Killing an Animal"
- 5) "Stealing"
- 6) "Sexual Misconduct"
- 7) "Speaking a Lie"

Please note: of the four types of killing, only "killing a human or human fetus" is "similar to a downfall for a full monk or nun.

6) What are the five layperson vows? (Tibetan track: list these in Tibetan as well as English.)

1) Killing a human or human fetus

མིའམ་མིར་ཆགས་པ་གསོད་པ།

mi am mir chags pa supa,

2) Stealing anything of significant value

ཀར་ཤ་པ་ནའི་བཞི་ཚད་ཀྱི་རིན་ཐང་ཚང་བརྟུ་བ།

karshapani shichay tse kyi rintang tsang kuwa

3) Lying about your spiritual attainments

1. To keep the sangha together
2. To make sure that the sangha is prosperous
3. To makes sure that the sangha has a comfortable, joyful existence. This primarily means that having common values increases the comfort of those who live by them.
4. To make sure that those who do not yet believe, believe.
5. To make sure that those who do believe, strengthen their belief
6. To restrain those who are difficult to restrain
7. To make sure that those who are ashamed obtain a comfortable existence (this apparently relates to the confession of impurities)
8. To stop the current impurities
9. To stop the future impurities
10. To make sure that the “true law” (apparently meaning the monastic discipline) continues.

3) How do you strengthen your seeds? (use the concept of the four elements in your answer) (Tibetan track: give the Tibetan for each of the four elements)

You do the action with all four elements present:

1. The foundation: which has two parts: the person committing the deed and the person or object that they act towards.

གཞི། རྟེན། ཡུལ།

SHI TEN YUL

2. The thinking involved or “state of mind”, which consists of two parts, the recognition and the intention.

བསམ་པ། འདུ་ཤེས། ཀུན་སྒྲོང།

SAMPA DUSHE KUNLONG

3. You set out to do the deed. This is the undertaking.

སྐྱོད་བ།

JORWA

4. You finish the job, and rejoice in what you have done. This is completion.



Answer Key One: Strengthening the Seeds

1) Give the name of the commentary that we will be using for this course, along with the name of the author and his dates. Also name the Sera Mey teacher who taught these vows to us in India (Tibetan track: give the Tibetan for names)

The commentary, which was given by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419) is called *Getsul Gyi Labja Namtse Dengma* which can be translated as “Soaring to the Top of the Sky: Rules for Novice Monks and Nuns”, or as *Rules for Novice Monks and Nuns: A Commentary from Namtse Deng*. The commentary is based on notes taken by a student of Je Tsongkapa’s during his talks at Namtse Deng Monastery. We received oral instruction by Gyelrong Khensur Rinpoche Ngakwang Tukchok, at Sera Mey monastery. The oral instruction was given in Tibetan and was translated into English by Geshe Michael Roach.

དགེ་ལུ་གྱི་བསྐྱབ་བྱ་གནམ་ཅི་ལྷིང་མ་བཞུག

getsul gyi labja nam tse deng ma shuk

རྗེ་ཙོང་ཁ་པ་

je tsongkapa (1357-1419)

རྒྱལ་ཡོང་མཁན་ལུང་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དག་དབང་ལྷུག་མཚོག

gyelrong khensur rinpoche ngakwang tukchok

2) List the 10 motives that Lord Buddha gave for teaching these vows.

Lord Buddha said the motivation for having vows (with reference to the full nuns vows) has 10 parts: