



Section 1. Ten Causes of Squandering

Having possessed a precious human life with eight freedoms and ten endowments*, and having met a qualified spiritual master, those individuals who wish to attain liberation and omniscient Buddhahood should, from the very beginning, recollect the ten causes of losing/squandering the fortunate opportunity.

1. This pure human body, so difficult to acquire, is squandered in wrongdoings.**

From my own experience, these points really come down to the Four Thoughts that Turns the Mind (precious human life, impermanence, karma cause and effect, and the faults of samsara). The real essence here is that it is very important to contemplate the Four Thoughts. The first three points point out how the precious human life

with freedoms and endowments, so difficult to acquire, is squandered in various ways.

2. This pure human body with its freedom and resources, so difficult to possess, is squandered in ordinary physical death without Dharma.

3. This brief human life in the age of decadence is squandered in meaningless activities.

Here mentions that this precious human life is brief and impermanent.

4. This mind whose nature is the Dharmakaya beyond elaboration is squandered when it is mired in the swamp of samsaric confusion.

Here, it touches on the faults and sufferings of samsara.

5. The holy guru who leads one on the path is squandered if one separates from him/her at any time until one attains awakening.

6. Vows (pratimoksha vows, bodhisattva vows, and the Vajrayana vows) and samaya, the ship of liberation, are squandered when they are impaired by afflictions, carelessness, and adverse conditions.

Here, it talks about karma cause and effect, and the importance of keeping one's precepts.

7. The experience and realization that one has acquired through the connection with one's guru are squandered when allowed to dissipate in the jungle of mental formations through worldly activities.

8. The profound instructions of siddhas are squandered by being sold to the unworthy.

9. Sentient beings, one's kind parents, are squandered when one abandons them through anger.

10. One's youthful three gates (body, speech, and mind) are squandered in ordinary indifference.

[To be continued...]

* Eight freedoms mean free from the eight unfavorable conditions—hell, hungry ghost, animal, barbarian, and long-life god, holding wrong views, the absence of a Buddha, and being mute. Among the ten endowments, five acquired oneself and five acquired from outside. The five from oneself are being human, being born in a central country, having all the senses, not reverting to evil deeds, and having devotion to the teachings. The five from outside are a Buddha has appeared in this world, a Buddha taught the precious Dharma, the Dharma that was taught continues, there are followers of the Dharma which continues, and there is love and kind support from others.

** Regarding what wrongdoings or the ten non-virtues are and their effects, similar to their causes, *The Precious Garland (Ratnavali or Ratnamala)* by Nagarjuna says: *By taking life, we will be short-lived. Through stealing, we will lack possessions. Through adultery, we will face rivals. Through speaking falsely, we'll face slander. Divisive talk will separate us from our friends. Harsh speech will mean hearing unpleasant words. Gossip will cause our speech to lack nobility. Covetousness will destroy our hopes. Malice will bring us many fears. And wrong view will bring inferior beliefs.*