
The Condensed Lam Rim

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7 July 2004

Please seat yourself in a comfortable position and we can meditate for a little while as usual. You have to seat yourself upright, in a good position, comfortably. Then, on the basis of sitting in this position, the mind should become alert and clear. If one sits in the accurate meditation posture but one's mind is not alert and clear and one doesn't experience mental happiness it's not really satisfactory. One's meditation practice should produce an alert, clear and happy mind. If it doesn't do that one has to ask oneself what is the benefit in what one is doing. One has to ask oneself where the benefit of one's meditation practice would lie if it doesn't give one some happiness.

Happiness and suffering don't arise just out of nothing. They both arise in dependence upon their individual causes and conditions. One has to think about the conducive conditions for mental happiness. One will find that mental happiness depends on a certain type of mental outlook, on certain types of mental states, and a certain type of thoughts. There are other types of mental states and thoughts that produce mental unhappiness. One needs to identify which mental states produce mental happiness and which produce suffering. There are certain mental states that seem to be somehow immovable and almost unchangeable. One then needs to apply one's understanding of the way the mind works, one's understanding of the psychology of the mind, so that one comes to understand that even those mental states that seem to be very entrenched and natural can also be changed. In such a way one opens the door to change and can set out on the road towards change.

It is important that one understands, through one's own wisdom, that the mind can change. It is all very well when other people tell us that the mind can change because it arises in dependence on causes and conditions and, by employing certain techniques, one can change the mind. It is all very well when one hears it from others. It becomes much more effective however when one has confirmed this through one's own analysis of the mind, through one's own wisdom.

One's wisdom is important in all types of situations of one's life. Wisdom needs to be applied to all aspects of one's life. Through wisdom one can, for example, overcome one's procrastination and one's indecisiveness. Sometimes one is indecisive, one doesn't want to decide on a course of action and remains in a zone of indecisiveness and doesn't move forward. One can apply wisdom to the situation and decide what one should do.

One meditates in order to increase one's wisdom and to

generate, increase and refine one's happiness. In order to meditate you withdraw the mind from the distractive courses of action and from inappropriate objects. You stop engaging those objects and instead you turn the mind inwards, achieving total inner focus, and place the mind single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. With the mind single-pointedly absorbed into the breath we can meditate for a few minutes. *Pause for meditation.*

I think it would be very good if you meditate daily. The length of the meditation you can decide according to your ability and so forth, but I think it would be a very good idea if you meditate daily. One of the things that should definitely be a part of your daily programme is a time for meditation. Time for meditation should be present in your daily programme, a quite definite part of your daily programme. The aim of our daily programme is usually directed at attaining happiness, but usually only physical happiness, and we are not as much concerned with attaining mental happiness. One should also incorporate in one's daily programme actions that are aimed at attaining mental happiness and therefore meditation should be a part of one's daily programme.

By living one's day according to a certain format, according to a daily routine, the mind becomes very well trained. The mind becomes disciplined and well balanced. There are different types of lifestyles. One lifestyle is purely concerned with attaining mental happiness and subduing the mind. Another type of lifestyle is purely concerned with attaining physical happiness. A person whose lifestyle is wholly concentrated on attaining physical happiness needs to incorporate some aspects that are also concerned with attaining mental happiness. Some parts of the programme need to be changed and need to be directed towards attaining mental happiness. The person whose whole life turns around attaining mental happiness doesn't really need to incorporate anything of the other person's programme into their life, but with the reverse it needs to be done.

If a person dedicates their life to the pursuit of inner accomplishment they usually don't lack material happiness. We can observe this phenomenon in all the major religions. If people decide to dedicate their life to inner happiness, according to the one or other religion, one usually finds that they are not destitute of external and material happiness. On the other hand, if somebody dedicates their life towards the pursuit of attaining material happiness alone and neglects the inner happiness usually one finds that that person is totally devoid of happiness because they lack inner happiness. They are unable to enjoy the material happiness that they possess. That's why it is really important to generate mental happiness and to dedicate some time towards the attainment of mental happiness. Anyway, that's my idea. That's why I think that it's important for you to meditate on a daily basis. You should think about it with your own wisdom and decide with your own wisdom what you think is right. In this way one's wisdom becomes increased and one develops special types of wisdom.

A brief presentation of the way to strive

The actual way of striving

4.1.2.1.1 How to strive during the meditation session:

The 6 preparatory practices: 5) Gathering merit and purifying negativities

Of the seven limb practice we started with the limb of purification and confession and we said that the best method for purification and confession is to employ the four opponent powers.... to purify with the four opponent powers. The four opponent powers are firstly, the power of repudiation which is regenerating regret, secondly the power of the thorough application of the antidote, thirdly the power of promising not to engage in the action again, and fourthly the power of reliance which is taking refuge and generating bodhicitta.

Last time we explained the first power, the power of repudiation, which is basically generating regret for the action by reflecting upon the suffering results that were caused by the action or that will come about in the future through the action.

The Power of the Thorough Application of the Antidote

We then started with the power of the thorough application of the antidote and here we said that that in general any virtuous action can be an antidote but here (in the text) it gives six possible antidotes in particular to be used to purify the action.

The first (possible antidote) was reading the sutras, which we explained last time. The second is meditating on emptiness. The third is reciting protective mantras. The fourth is, to make statues of the Buddha with faith. The fifth is to make offerings. The last is to recite the names of the present Buddha and of past and future Buddhas.

Meditation on Emptiness

The second antidote, meditation on emptiness, is the most powerful antidote to purify negativities. Without getting too much into why emptiness is the most powerful antidote to purify negativities, what one has to do is meditate on the lack of inherent existence of the person that has created the negativity, the negativity that was created - the negative karma - and the action that created the karma. One views those three as illusory, as one would view as illusory the magical projection of a horse which, even though it appears as a horse, one would not grasp at as a horse. Likewise, even though the person who generated the action - the karma - appears inherently existent one doesn't believe in that appearance. Instead one focuses on their dependent arising, how they arise in dependence upon causes and conditions, and their interdependent relationships.

Protective Mantras

The third antidote was to recite protective mantras. An example of a protective mantra would be the one hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasatva. This is a very powerful means to purify. It purifies the negative karma accumulated by being disrespectful to one's teacher, one's preceptor, parents, engaging into the ten non-

virtues action, and so forth. It is said by reciting the one hundred syllable mantra 8,000 times one will be able to see Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with closed eyes. The various benefits associated with reciting the one hundred syllable mantra are, for example, when recited 21 times it will stop the increasing effect of karma and if one recites it 100,000 times it will purify even root breakages of the tantric vows. In general, the one hundred syllable mantra is used to purify faults that one incurred with regards to one's tantric practice and one's tantric vows. The *Practice of the Thirty Five Buddhas*, which is also called the *Bodhisattva's Confession*, is used to purify faults that one has incurred with regards to one's Bodhisattva ethics.

Making Buddha Statues with Faith

The next point, (the fourth antidote) was to make statues of Buddhas and deities out of faith. This will purify the various negativities one has incurred through engaging in the 10 non-virtuous actions, the 5 immediate karmas, which are also sometimes referred to as the 5 heinous crimes, and so forth. All those karmas are purified by making statues with faith. If one has a vessel that is very dirty and one cleans out that vessel and then purifies it with scented water one is able to remove all the stains that were present in the vessel. Likewise, by making statues with faith one is able to purify one's mental continuum from all stains.

Making Offerings

The fifth antidote was to make offerings. We have already explained in some detail how to make offerings. Making offerings purifies hundreds of aeons of non-virtuous karma so that one doesn't have to be reborn in the lower realms for a hundred lifetimes.

Relying on the Buddha's Names

The sixth antidote is reliance on the names of the Buddhas. The recitation of the names of the Buddhas is, for example, included in the *Bodhisattva's Confession*, the recitation of the *Thirty Five Buddhas*. One recites the names of the 35 Buddhas, which has a very great power. It's a very important practice to do. Understanding the power of the Buddhas names also makes it understandable why it is important and beneficial to recite the names of Buddhas into the ears of people who are going through the death process. It helps to purify their karma and to have a good rebirth.

That concludes the second opponent power of the application of the antidote. Next time we can continue with the third power, the promise not to repeat the action again. But for tonight, do you have a question?

If you consider the sequence of the seven limbs, initially prostrations, secondly making offerings, thirdly confession, we can see that there is an increase in difficulty in the practice. Basically anybody who has a sound body can do prostrations. Nearly everybody can do some kind of prostrations, so prostrations are something that everybody can do. However, when one wants to move on to making offerings it already becomes more difficult. Those who are stingy can't make offerings. You actually need to offer the offering substance and that

becomes difficult if one is stingy. If you are stingy you can still do prostrations but making offerings becomes difficult.

Prostrations and making offerings are actually regarded as a kind of preliminary to the third limb of confession and purification. Confession and purification is one of the central parts of the seven-limb practice. It is more difficult than the previous two because one really needs to understand the law of cause and effect. One needs to have some understanding of karma and its results, of the different types of afflictions and the different types of suffering results and so forth. It is not something that comes naturally to somebody who is unfamiliar with those topics. It is not something that comes naturally to a beginner.

Do you have questions? If you have some questions you can ask them now.

Question: If someone gives me something attained through wrong livelihood do I get a fault?

It depends on the type of wrong livelihood, but in general, if you don't commit a wrong livelihood, then you don't have a fault. Geshe-la thinks it might help if you identified the wrong livelihood.

Questioner: stealing.

If you didn't tell the person to steal the item then you don't really receive a fault. But if you were in it together, if you asked the person to do it, then you have a fault. If we tell another person to steal something for us then both that person and we ourselves incur the karma of stealing. One doesn't necessarily have to engage in the action oneself. If one orders the other person to do it, tells them to do it, then both oneself and the other person incur the karma of stealing because, in a way, you do it together. In that case it is actually better if one steals oneself then at least there is only one person who receives the karma of stealing. But if you didn't tell the person to steal the item you don't really have a fault.

Comment: What should one do when given a stolen object?

You can offer the object. You can use it for offering. Of course one shouldn't steal anything in order to make offerings but, if the object is already stolen, it is said that making offerings is a good way to use the object. Of course, if it is the case that one has stolen something like a clock and then, after having stolen the clock, one develops regret and thinks, 'Oh, that wasn't really the right thing to do' then, of course, the best course of action is to return the clock.

Question: It doesn't feel right to accept something that was stolen.

Of course one feels it wouldn't be right to take the object, but the thief has already attained the power over the object. Then, if he gives the object to you it wouldn't be stealing from your side. From the point of view of the law it wouldn't be right because there would be provisions in the law for accepting stolen goods or whatever. But, in principle, just accepting stolen goods is not stealing itself. However, in Tibet one used to say that if you eat food that was stolen you are a thief. If you eat food that is

stolen, you can't say that you are not a thief. If there's a group of five people and one of the group brings food that he has stolen and the whole group eats the food and you can't return the food. Then whole group, all five, have become thieves. Anyway, that's the saying.

Question or comment from audience, inaudible.

For example, if somebody steals \$100 from their employer and then gives his three friends \$25 each it's been divided between four people, \$25 each. Later, when the employer finds out that that person stole \$100, it will become very difficult for the other three, who accepted \$25 each, to show that they are not involved in the theft because they had accepted the money. In some parts of Australia, the Northern Territory or Darwin?, they have provisions made for aborigines that can put you into prison for stealing just a very little amount such as \$20. (Comment from the audience.) I think I heard that maybe 2 years ago. I think it was a woman, a politician anyway, who said she was going to overturn that law. I was aware that she had said that she was going to overturn it (that law) but I wasn't aware that it has actually happened in the meantime. It seems that it has happened.

Question: Do you create negative karma playing violent computer games?

If the game increases or generates attachment and anger then you create negative karma. When one watches movies and one becomes involved in the story and, for example, generate anger at the antagonist, you generate completely pointlessly non-virtue. It is said that there are monks who want to give up being ordained after having gone to the movies (laughter) because attachment increases and mindfulness lessens. But then they are able to reign the mind in again with mindfulness.

As was explained in the beginning, bring the mind home, turn it inwards and then place it on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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