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## The Condensed Lam Rim

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga  
Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

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Please seat yourself in a comfortable and correct meditation posture. As I have said before, even though we might just do a short meditation it is still important that one sits comfortably and relaxed for that short time.

Our meditation practice should give us some experience of happiness and it should produce happiness. Deep down, what motivates us in all of our actions is that we want to attain happiness. However, even though deep down that is the motivation for all our actions, till now one hasn't really been that successful. As the great pandit Sakya Pandit said, independence is happiness, and being under the control of others is suffering. What he meant was that if one has independence within one's mind then one is a happy person. If one's mind is, however, under the control of something else, then one doesn't have happiness. If we just relate that to ourselves, if one has independence then one has happiness. If one has to live under the control of someone else then one's life is not as happy. As with the example, if one has that freedom of having control of one's mind then one is a happy person. But if one's mind is under the control of the mental afflictions then one is not a happy person. Therefore, what one needs to aim to achieve is independence. By slowly, slowly freeing the mind from the control of the mental afflictions one will gain more and more mental independence and freedom.

One can only free one's mind from the control of mental afflictions if one has recognised those mental afflictions. One has to recognise those mental afflictions and then one has to oppose the mental afflictions with their respective antidote. By generating the appropriate mental state one can oppose the mental afflictions and in this way free one's mind from their control.

When one applies antidotes to the mental afflictions these antidotes have to really hit the spot, so to speak. If one meditates on the antidote to an affliction but, at the same time, keeps that meditation on the antidote separate from the object of one's afflictions, if one doesn't relate the antidote to the object of one's afflictions, that meditation

won't hit the spot. If one still keeps the object of one's mental afflictions, if one still cherishes it within one's heart and doesn't apply the antidote to it, and keeps the antidote separate, then the meditation won't have an effect. By practising meditation properly and lessening the mental afflictions one's mind will become happier and more relaxed and one will have a happier quality of life.

Turn the mind inwards. This should not be only trying to achieve a partial internal focus - one should collect one's mind totally towards the inside. Then, from within that state, place the mind single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. We can meditate like that for a few minutes. *Pause for meditation.*

Even if you just meditate for a short while, make that short time of meditation a meditation of good quality. That is much more important. Don't let your mind engage external objects, but keep it focused internally. In this way, when the mind settles internally, it becomes like giving the mind a rest, and there is some time for happiness and peace for the mind.

### 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

#### REJOICING

Practising rejoicing is a good preparation for the future attainment of complete enlightenment. It also acts as the antidote against jealousy. On the one hand, it evens the path to the future enlightenment that one is going to attain and, on the other, it acts as an antidote against jealousy. Jealousy happens when one is unable to bear the success and happiness of others. This may be material success, fame or appearance and so forth. When the thought that one is not able to bear the success of the other person arises in the mind, then that is jealousy, and it disturbs the mind. By practising rejoicing this thought doesn't arise. In this way one has more happiness within one's mind. If the mind is under the control of karma and afflictions the mind is unhappy. One has to reverse that and, by protecting the mind from jealousy, one then experiences happiness.

One can see that if one thinks in one way it causes mental suffering whilst if one thinks in the other way it makes the mind happy. If one is able to rejoice when one sees the perfections of others it

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makes the mind happy. If one is unable to bear the happiness of the other person that makes the mind unhappy. Generating this thought of rejoicing in other's happiness is quite a difficult thing to do. One is jealous of the success of one's friends, not to mention the success of one's enemies. One is even jealous of the success of one's friends and relatives. Sisters, for example, tend to be very jealous of each other and each other's success. At the moment that's the state of one's mind. But by slowly, slowly training one's mind that can be overcome and changed.

## **REQUESTING TO TURN THE WHEEL OF DHARMA**

The next limb is making requests to the merit field, to the Buddha, to turn the wheel of Dharma - to give teachings. In the *King of Prayers* where one makes this request of the Buddhas to turn the wheel of Dharma it says something to the effect of, *'I make request to the Lamps of the Dharma of the three times and ten directions to turn the wheel of Dharma so that migrators may attain the state without attachment'*. The 'state without attachment' refers to enlightenment. Lama Tsong-Khapa said something to the effect of, *'With 100,000 bodies, I make a request to you who have attained perfect enlightenment to teach the complete stages of the path to enlightenment to sentient beings so that they also can attain enlightenment'*.

There are two categories of teachings. There's what is referred to as the scriptural teachings and there's what is referred to as the realised teachings. The scriptural teachings refer to the actual enlightened words and the realised teachings refer to the subjects of those words. The scriptural teachings are the cause and the realised teachings are the result.

Within the Dharma we have the causal Dharma and the resultant Dharma. The causal Dharma are the words to which one is listening; the Dharma teachings that one is initially listening to. Then comes the next step, to contemplate those Dharma teachings. By contemplating upon the Dharma teachings and meditating upon them one generates the realised Dharma, which is the resultant Dharma. In this way one progresses along the path.

A wheel goes from one place to the next. One talks about the Dharma wheel because the Dharma goes from one student to the next. It was passed on by Shakyamuni Buddha to his disciples and they passed it on to their disciples and so forth.

When one practices this limb one directs one's request to those Buddhas that have just become enlightened; where not much time has passed since their enlightenment. Buddhas who have been

enlightened for a long time have already been requested to teach the Dharma. The Buddhas who have just become enlightened have not yet been requested so one directs one's request to those Buddhas.

One visualises the Buddhas of the three times and the ten directions who have become enlightened in recent time. Basically one visualises countless Buddha fields in front of oneself with Buddhas, and then one visualises many, many replicas of oneself that make the request. One makes the request with hands folded in the mudra of prostration, while mentally having a very vivid visualisation. One then needs to meditate that one's request has been accepted by those Buddhas. When one is making the request one does it in conjunction with a mandala offering; ideally the nine-heap mandala done on a six-spoked golden Dharma wheel. One can visualise that. One can also visualise oneself as a Brahma or, if one is practising a particular deity, that deity. If one visualises oneself as a deity one doesn't have to visualise oneself as a Brahma. The person who first requested the Buddha to teach was Brahma and the place where the Buddha first taught was Varanasi. I will tell you the significance of that next time.

Tonight, if you have some questions....

*Question: Could you talk more about the mind observing the mind?*

First the conceptual thoughts have to subside. The more that conceptual thoughts subside the more the nature of the mind becomes more manifest. After conceptual thoughts have subsided and the nature of the mind is fully manifest one can meditate on the nature of the mind. If we try to look at the mind now disturbing thoughts obscures our view. The clear nature of the mind is being obscured.

The nature of the mind is clear and knowing. 'Clear' refers to the innate purity of the mind. 'Knowing' refers to its ability to know or perceive objects. The mind arises in the aspect of objects. Another way of phrasing that is that the objects are reflected in the mind, similarly to objects being reflected in a clear mirror.

When the conceptual thought process subsides the clear mind becomes manifest. The appearance of the clear mind becomes very vivid and strong. As Atisha said, 'the supreme practice is watching one's mind. One can relate that also to this practice of watching the clear nature of one's mind'. When one sees the clear nature of one's mind one comes to incontrovertibly understand one's Buddha potential. By watching one's mind one will also recognise the faults and qualities of one's mind and know which

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ones to lessen and which ones to increase.

*Question: About dreaming while asleep?*

You probably fell asleep (*laughter*). You can't really dream without being asleep. Sometimes, maybe, we get a mixture of meditation and dream. You start off meditating but you come closer to the sleeping state than the meditation state and then it becomes mixed with dreaming. Sometimes you have very sweet dreams.

*Question: What to do when drowsy while meditating?*

There are different things that one can do such as attaching a bell to one's forehead (*laughter*). If that doesn't work you can stand up. There was a fully ordained monk who tied a string between two trees and he would walk along the string and meditate while walking and being guided by the string. If that doesn't work then you might break the meditation and go out where it's clear and refreshing. You can splash cold water on your face. All these tricks are explained in the Vinaya teachings.

*Question: I someone gets upset by my present do I get negative karma?*

No, Geshe-la says there is not because you gave it with a pure motivation. Why should you have a negative result just because they don't like it? You know that you gave it with a pure mind. If they are unsatisfied, there's nothing that you can do.

*Question: My friend says she saw here deceased son. Is that possible for normal people? What should I say to them?*

Human beings can see intermediate state beings, that's nothing special. What has the person actually seen? How has he seen the intermediate state being?

When they say they saw him, did he look like he did before or did he look different? It is significant how they describe him. If, for example, it is an intermediate state being that is supposed to be reborn in the desire realm it should be the size of either a five-year-old or a ten-year-old.

It can also happen that sometimes certain non-human beings emanate in the aspect of the deceased just to play with certain human beings. When those human beings see these emanations they think, 'Oh, I am seeing the ghost of the deceased', or that the deceased is visiting them from the realm of the dead or something like that. Sometimes they believe that they can communicate with the deceased. That also happens. Maybe it's something like that.

Maybe it is the best just not to say anything because we can't be sure whether it was that bardo, that intermediate state, or not. We can't really say that it

was their son. In certain cases relatives and so forth feel comforted if they have this type of reference point. They are able to say 'Oh, I have some kind of communication with the deceased and they are telling me that they are happy and well'. That's not the case in this situation, so maybe it's the best not to say anything.

As was explained at the beginning, turn the mind inwards and place it single-pointedly on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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*Edited Version*

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