
The Condensed Lam Rim

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga
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We can meditate for a little bit as usual. For that purpose, please seat yourself in a good meditation posture. As well as sitting in a good meditation posture it is important to have a clear mind. Making the mind clear will also have a positive effect on the body. It will energise and refresh the body. When the mind is not relaxed and clear it makes one feel also physically tired. When the mind is not clear it takes away one's physical energy and one has less aspiration to do things. When the mind is clear it energises one physically and one can do more. Some of you might think, 'Oh, to sit in the appropriate meditation posture, that's not too difficult, but to have a clear mind seems to be extremely difficult.' That is correct.

There is no doubt that one needs a mind that is more stable and clearer. The next step in one's meditation is to investigate the conditions that make the mind unstable and unclear. One will find that there is always a multitude of images in the mind, some of them pleasant and some of them unpleasant. One then generates attachment-desire for the objects that appear as pleasant and desirable and one generates anger for the objects that appear as undesirable.

This multitude of images generates attachment and anger, but it is not just one instant of attachment and anger. This multitude of objects each generates a train of thought either in conjunction with attachment or in conjunction with anger, a train of thought that is, in itself, made up out of innumerable thoughts. One train of thought that is set in motion contains thoughts beyond count. We are talking about many trains of thought being set in motion by attachment and anger to many different objects and each of these trains of thought is accompanied by ignorance. It increases the mental darkness in one's mind. As this happens in the mind, the mind becomes more and more filled with these limitless conceptual thoughts until it is completely overwhelmed. When it gets to that stage the person feels overwhelmed and completely unhappy. Regardless of what one does there is this feeling in the mind that one is completely overwhelmed and that nothing that one does can provide happiness. It is important that one recognises the danger of the mind being overwhelmed in this way.

In this situation the mind is completely enclosed by disturbing thoughts and is squeezed by the disturbing thoughts from all directions. What one has to recognise is that as long as the mind stays in that state there is not a chance to experience happiness. But when one is able to free the mind from the dominance of disturbing thoughts one is able to experience happiness. One needs to be able to recognise this distinction and then recognise that there

is a method through which one can free the mind from the dominance of the disturbing thoughts. If there were no such method it would be hopeless but, since there is such a method, it is definitely something that one should practise.

That is the significance of meditation because meditation is that method. By focusing the mind single-pointedly on a meditational object other thoughts subside. Of course this process does not happen immediately. It is not something that brings overnight results. If the mind has been disturbed by disturbing thoughts for a long time it will be very difficult to free it immediately from the dominance of these thoughts. That happens through continual practice, slowly, slowly over time. For example, if somebody has led a very wild life they will not change immediately but through consistent effort they can become more subdued and more refined. It is the same with the mind.

The meditation for tonight is the meditation on the coming and going of the breath. Once you are sitting in a good meditation posture you bring the mind back home, focusing it internally and ceasing engaging external objects and then, after having focused the mind internally, place it single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. We can meditate in that manner for a few minutes. The mind becomes one with the breathing.
Pause for meditation.

I think it would be a good idea for you to meditate in this manner on a daily basis. I think it would be extremely beneficial. It's good sometimes to ask oneself what kind of experience one would like to have. Would one like to be mentally happy or does one prefer to be mentally unhappy? If one prefers to be mentally happy then one must engage in actions that bring that about.

It's good to be one's own educator. If one has done something good then tell oneself, 'Oh, you did really well. That was the right thing to do. I should do that again in the future. If one did something wrong tell oneself, 'That was the wrong thing to do, you shouldn't do that again'. In this way one looks after oneself. Doing this is very useful. You can say to yourself, 'Today I did really well so now I can have a nice dinner'. I do the same with myself, telling myself, 'Geshe Doga, today you did very well, so today you can have a nice meal'.

4.2.2 The way in which one takes the essence

4.2.2.1 A general Presentation of the Path

Previously we talked about how the sole purpose of the Buddha's teachings is the benefit of sentient beings, which can be summed up as higher status and definite goodness. The paths of the three kinds of beings lead to these aims. We completed the path of the small capable being and the path of the medium capable being. The paths of the small and medium capable beings are respectively the path to higher rebirth and liberation. Now we are looking at the path to enlightenment, which is the path of the great capable being.

The path of the great capable being contains both the path of secret mantra as well as the path of the perfection vehicle. Both the path of secret mantra and the path of the

perfection vehicle were taught for the being of great capacity.

What is a *being of great capacity*? A being of great capacity is a being that is overcome by great compassion. In our case we are more overcome by attachment and desire, but a being of great capacity is overcome by great compassion.

Here are four characteristics to consider. (1) A being of great capacity has the *thought* of great compassion. (2) It has the *purpose* of the welfare of all sentient beings in its heart. (3) Out of great compassion for that purpose the being of great capacity takes complete enlightenment, which is endowed with all qualities and free from all faults, as its *aim* and (4) then engages into the *practice* of the six perfections to achieve that aim.

In the *Lamp to the Path to Enlightenment* it says that the being of great capacity, after understanding its own suffering, understands how others suffer and then wants to achieve complete enlightenment for the welfare of others. This explanation of a being of great capacity is, of course, only a very short summary, an introductory summary. The main explanation follows later.

The terms 'being of small, medium and great capacity' have as their source, among others, the *Compendium of Understanding* by Asanga and the *Treatise on the Abhidharma*. A being of small capacity can, in general, be a person whose concern is the happiness of this life, or a person whose concern is primarily the happiness of the future life. Here it specifically refers to the second option, a person who has given up the happiness of this life that unmistakably practises the method to achieve happiness in the next life.

Do have any questions for tonight?

Question: Why is it called Secret Mantra?

It is called a secret mantra because the practitioner practises in secret. It's a practice that you don't show to others. The meaning of mantra is 'that which rescues the mind'. It either rescues the mind from suffering or rescues the mind from ordinary appearance. The word mantra comprises two syllables, *man* and *tra*. *Man* comes from *mana*, which means 'mind' and *tra* means to 'liberate or protect'. So a mantra is something that protects the mind and specifically protects the mind from suffering. That is one explanation by Lama Tsongkhapa. Or it protects the mind from ordinary appearance.

Question: What are the six perfections?

The six perfections are the perfection of generosity, morality, patience, enthusiasm, mental stabilisation and wisdom. In order to achieve the purpose of others, to ripen their potential, one needs to practise generosity, pure morality, and patience. The practice of enthusiasm is linked both to the purpose of self as well as to the purpose of others. The practices of mental stabilisation and wisdom are to achieve one's own potential.

If one wants to benefit sentient beings and make them happy then, first of all, one needs to refrain from actions that harm them. This is the practice of morality. Then one

makes them happy with generosity. Then one needs the practice of patience, because even though one engages in the first two not all sentient beings are necessarily grateful if one helps them. One needs the practice of patience in order to be able to continue to work for the welfare of others. Bodhisattvas have very big aims and very vast minds and they recognise that there are many, many sentient beings with many different dispositions. There are some with poor character so, inevitably, sentient beings aren't always grateful for what one does for them, or reply in kind. One needs to have patience so that one's mind does not become disturbed. The more compassion one has the better one's patience will be. If one has strong compassion one is less likely to become angry with the other person.

4.2.2 The way in which one takes the essence

4.2.2.1 The way to practice the paths of the three types of beings (cont)

The next point is the reason why the path is laid out according to the three types of beings. Some people might say, 'Well, what is the point of engaging in practices that are common to the small and medium capable beings? Why does one not immediately start with the practices of the great capable being?' The text explains why one is led along the three paths.

The paths of the small and medium capable beings are actually contained within the path of the great capable being. Even though it looks as if there are three separate paths, the path of the small and medium capable beings are contained within the path of the great capable being. They are different steps in the path of the person of great capacity.

The paths of the small and medium capable being are seen as preparatory stages for the being of great capacity. Even though the actual beings of small capacity and medium capacity aim respectively only for mere samsaric happiness in the next life, or merely self-liberation, the being of great capacity needs to engage in the practices common to the medium and small being as preparation.

One should not be confused and should understand that if one practises the Lam Rim one should do so either for the purpose of generating bodhicitta, if one has not yet generated bodhicitta, or after one has generated bodhicitta to attain complete enlightenment. That is a very important instruction.

In our case we engage in the practice of the Lam Rim in order to generate bodhicitta and those who have already generated bodhicitta engage in the practice of the Lam Rim in order to attain complete enlightenment.

Since there are no questions we can do the mantra recitation. First bring the mind back home, focus it inwards and, as is always said, it's important for you to keep a positive and happy mind. The methods for having that mind are to stay aware and mindful.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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