

---

## The Condensed Lam Rim

༄༅། །བྱུང་ཚུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ་བཞུགས་སོ། །

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

3 August 2005

---

We can meditate for a little bit as usual. You need sit comfortably and be relaxed. We meditate to attain inner happiness. Different mental states within the mind – such as attachment, anger, pride, jealousy and competitiveness – prevent us from having a happy life. To experience happiness, we need to meditate and overcome these different disturbing mental states, which prevent us from attaining greater happiness. Our meditation should act as an antidote to attachment, anger and so forth– that is what meditation is for.

For example, if our mind and our happiness are disturbed by strong attachment and desire, we need to meditate on a mental state that is free from attachment and desire. If the mind is disrupted by anger, we need to meditate on the antidote to anger, which is love and compassion. In such a way our meditation should act as an antidote to the individual afflictions that prevent happiness from arising in the mind. Our meditation should enable us to experience a life that is not disturbed by jealousy, anger, competitiveness and so forth. Even if we have good external conditions, these will not make us happy if we do not work with the root of happiness, which is the mind.

We should not look outside to find the source of our happiness and suffering. Rather, we should recognise that we will not be able to experience happiness – even if we have good external conditions – if we do not work with the root of happiness, which is the mind. If we experience unhappiness, we should not look outside for the fault, but should look internally, identifying the mental state responsible for our unhappiness and then dealing with that mental state through meditation. In this way, our situation will become perfect because we will have both the external and internal conditions for happiness, and will thus have a more complete experience of happiness.

Personally, when I experience happiness, I still observe my mind and analyse where the experience of happiness is coming from. I analyse whether that happiness comes from the mind having wandered off to external objects, or whether it is true happiness that arises from within the mind. If it is the first, then I recall the mind and focus it again internally; if it is the second, I rejoice and enjoy it!

As a practitioner, one should always observe when the mind is experiencing either happiness or suffering, because either can become the cause to lose one's virtues. We need to take care in both situations. When one experiences happiness, one should rejoice and meditate on dependent-arising – recalling that this happiness arose from virtuous karma that one created through previous

Dharma practice. This will enable us to recognise the value of Dharma practice and rejoice in our previous Dharma practice. It will cause us to think: “I have to practise the Dharma more strongly and continuously, so that I will not lose this happiness and will create the cause for more happiness”.

If we are experiencing suffering, we can again meditate on karmic dependent-arising by reflecting upon the cause of that experience of suffering, which is non-virtue. When we experience suffering, we can remind ourselves that the cause of that suffering is non-virtue that we created previously. This will remind us not to create any further non-virtue, so that we will not experience that suffering again in the future.

This understanding of karmic cause-and-effect relationships comes about over time. It does not come about immediately. We need to think it through thoroughly, over a long period of time. Then we will slowly develop an understanding of karmic cause-and-effect relationships. It is a difficult understanding to gain, one that we cannot gain immediately.

Since I have already taught you the way to meditate, we can now meditate for a while on the coming and going of the breath. Although this meditation on the coming and going of the breath is not the specific antidote to anger and attachment, it is the specific antidote to the over-conceptualising mind. So, because it can pacify the over-conceptualising mind, it can also pacify anger and attachment to some degree. We will sit in the meditation posture, turn the mind inwards, then place it on the coming and going of the breath. (*Pause for meditation*)

### 4.2.2.1.2 The actual way to take the essence

#### 4.2.2.1.2.1 Training the mind in the stages of the path of the small capable being

##### 4.2.2.1.2.1.1 The actual way of training in the motivation common to the being of small capacity

###### 4.2.2.1.2.1.1.1 Generating the aspiration for happiness in the future life

###### 4.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.1 Remembering death, becoming aware that one is not going to remain for a long time

As we said the other day, when we meditate on death and impermanence, we should not generate the fear born of worrying that we will be separated from our friends, possessions and so forth. It can happen that when we meditate on death and impermanence, we generate the fear of losing our friends and so forth. This is not the point of meditating on death and impermanence, as we explained last time. Today, we will explain the correct way to meditate on death and impermanence.

There is a difference between the fear generated by meditating on death and impermanence without having a proper understanding, and the fear generated by a person who has the proper Dharma understanding. Someone with a proper Dharma understanding will realise that since we are under the power of karma and afflictions, we have no choice but to die sooner or later; there is nothing we can do to change that fact. Therefore death itself is not to be feared, it is merely a fact of life.

---

---

What we should be afraid of is taking rebirth through non-virtuous karma. As Geshe-la said, we should not be afraid of death, but we should be afraid of what comes after death, because if we have not purified the causes for a lower rebirth, and if we have not created the causes for a higher rebirth or even liberation, then what comes after death is indeed to be feared. So, what we should be afraid of is dying without having purified our non-virtuous karma, and without having created virtuous karma. That is what we should be afraid of. Death by itself is not something that we need fear. Someone with an understanding of Dharma will generate this correct type of fear.

While we cannot do anything about dying, we can do something about the karma with which we die. We must recognise that we can do something about our karma. We can purify the non-virtuous karma that we have accumulated and create new virtuous karma to ensure a higher rebirth. We have the power to do that, and recognising this is very important.

It is impossible to change the fact that one must die, but one can die without fear. The way to die without fear is to purify one's karma. We need to recognise that it lies within our power to purify our non-virtuous karma and create virtuous karma. By doing this, we can die without the fear of going to a suffering realm, and die with the confidence that we will have a higher rebirth.

We can actually die in a happy state, with a happy mind, if we have thoroughly purified our karma. There will be no need to worry. Not only can we die without fear, but we can actually die with a happy mind, regardless of whether we are a Dharma practitioner or not. Even for someone who does not accept past and future lives, at the time of death, the thought that their existence will not completely be annihilated – that there is something that will continue to a future life or existence – will automatically come into their mind. If that person has purified their negative karma, they can die without regrets, with an easy and happy mind.

Reflecting repeatedly on the fact that we will definitely have to leave behind our body and possessions will enable us to overcome the craving that does not want to be separated from our body and possessions. By repeatedly reflecting on how it is inevitable that we will be separated from our body and possessions, we will lessen the craving for our body and our possessions, and our mind will become easier. Also, we need to turn the mind inwards. When the mind goes to external objects, we need to immediately recall it and focus it inwards, not letting it fall under the control of anger and attachment. This will prepare the mind for the time of death, so that it can remain in a virtuous state, not being disturbed by attachment and anger.

Do you have any questions for tonight? The next outline is the actual meditation on death and impermanence.

*Question:* If you have got anger and you want to use the antidote and meditate on love, is this not just forcing yourself to feel something you don't actually feel? I'm wondering if anger would just change into love gradually

through understanding.

*Answer:* It is true that when we are angry with someone, at that time, we do not have love for that person. The purpose of meditating on love is to generate love for that person, which is not really done in an abrupt or harsh manner, but rather in a gentle, understanding manner.

The reason is that the two minds are opposites. For example, when we love a person, at that time we are not angry with them. If we are angry with them, at that time we don't love them. So they are opposites, and the existence of one stops the existence of the other. By generating love for someone, when we are angry with them, the anger will naturally go away, because love is the counterforce to anger.

That is why one meditates on love and compassion, because the basic nature of anger is harmful intent. One wants to harm the object of one's anger. Love is exactly the opposite. One wants to see the other person happy, and wishes the other person happiness. So they are direct opposites.

When we generate love for someone, we wish that other person to be happy, and this automatically makes the anger go away. The anger subsides naturally. The more love one has for the person, the faster the anger subsides.

Sometimes, when we get angry with someone, the harmful intent might start out weak, but then we start thinking about the ways in which we have been mistreated by the other person, the times that they looked at us in the wrong way or spoken to us in the wrong way, and so forth. When we remember these things, we get worked up and the anger becomes stronger. At such a time, it is useful to remind ourselves of the disadvantages of anger; this can stop the process.

Of course, we can also deal with anger by analysing the anger and the nature of the anger and so forth.

*Question:* If one's aim is to pursue virtuous karma and that generates happiness, and then you want to be in that happy state again and again, isn't that craving for happiness and therefore attachment to happiness?

*Answer:* No, that is not correct. Craving is primarily the craving for happiness from an external object, but here you are generating happiness yourself through creating virtuous karma. That is different.

Also, craving is a form of attachment, which is a distorted mind, an unrealistic mind. The nature of attachment is to distort reality. For example, there's a vast difference in the way an object appears to the mind depending on whether we look at it with or without attachment. When we look at the object with attachment, it appears very desirable and attractive. There is a mental process through which one mentally builds up the desirable aspects of the object. We mentally exaggerate the desirable aspects of the object, making it appear more and more desirable, to the point where we have the feeling that we cannot possibly live without the object.

However, when attachment for the object has subsided and we look at the object without attachment, we have a

---

completely different perspective. We look at the object in a completely different light. If we lose our attachment to the object and look at it in a different light, there's a completely new perception of it. This shows that the perception of attachment is unrealistic.

For that reason I also always advise that one should take care in making decisions about one's relationships when one is under the influence of desire. When one is blinded by desire and attachment for the other person, one cannot clearly see the other person, how they really are. One does not see any kind of fault in the other person. If one is blinded by attachment, everything the other person says or does appears in a good light. One sees nothing unattractive and has this strong feeling that definitely, that other person is the person one is meant to be with and that they are one's sole best friend in life. This feeling lasts as long as one's attachment lasts. Usually something insignificant will happen that will make one lose one's attachment to the other person. As soon as that happens, one can't wait to be separated from them!

Often, when one starts to living with the other person, one begins to see their faults. One may be friends with somebody for a long time and not really realise the different aspects of the other person's mind. However, when one moves closer to that person, one often starts to see their faults very clearly. You see situations where two people, who have been a couple for a long time, marry, go off on a honeymoon, and come back from their honeymoon divorced! (*Laughter*) This has happened to many couples.

So, one needs to act in a responsible way and look after one's mind.

As was said at the beginning, focus the mind internally and place it on the name mantra of the Buddha.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

*Transcribed from tape by Gabrielle Thomson*

*Edit 1 by Mary-Lou Considine*

*Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak*

*Edited Version*

© **Tara Institute**