
The Condensed Lam Rim

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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We can meditate a little bit as usual. For this you need to seat yourself in a good posture. Then, while sitting in a physically relaxed manner, you need to adjust the mind. A good way of looking at meditation is to think that meditation is the single-pointed focus of the mind on a virtuous object. By focusing the mind single-pointedly on a virtuous object one can overcome harmful mental states, and the mind becomes happier, more peaceful, clearer and so forth. By single-pointedly training the mind on a virtuous object one can pacify disturbing thoughts. This single-pointed training of the mind on a virtuous object is called meditation.

One important ingredient is that the mind is single-pointedly focused on the object and is free from mental excitement and mental sinking. If the mind is focused single-pointedly on the meditation object, free from mental sinking and mental excitement, the mind becomes clearer, one's wisdom increases and the mind becomes happier and so forth. If the mind remains single-pointedly on the object, but is not free from mental sinking and mental excitement, there can be the reverse effect of the mind being slightly down and actually lessening one's wisdom.

We can meditate for a few minutes. The mind needs to be adjusted correctly. If the mind is too tight it causes mental excitement and if the mind is too relaxed then it causes mental sinking. One has to find a middle way where the mind is tuned just right and this is something that one can only know from experience. We can meditate for a few minutes, just turning the mind inwards and placing it on the coming and going of the breath. (*Pause for meditation*)

It's important to meditate regularly because it is important for the mind to remain peaceful. If the mind is peaceful the actions of one's body and speech become peaceful, while if the mind is agitated it harms oneself and it will harm others through actions of one's body and speech.

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

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2 Relying on the methods for achieving happiness in future lives

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1 Training on going for refuge

Last week we completed the qualities of the Buddha's body, speech and mind and now we come to the qualities of the Buddha's enlightened activities. The Buddha's

enlightened activities never cease and they occur instantaneously with the need or opportunity to help sentient beings.

The meaning of instantaneous action is that the enlightened activities of the Buddha do not depend on motivating conceptual thoughts, but they occur instantaneously and simultaneously with the ripening of the karma of sentient beings. Because they do not depend on a motivating, conceptual thought they can be also continual. Continual means they do not just sometimes adventitiously arise, but that the enlightened activities of a Buddha never cease.

An example of the enlightened activity of the body is that if one sees the enlightened form of the Buddha one will become inspired to also attain such a state thinking, "I want to become like that". The enlightened activity of speech is the Dharma teachings that the Buddha gives spontaneously without any motivational thought, in accordance with the dispositions and karmas of sentient beings.

Sometimes the miraculous emanations of the Buddha are regarded as the enlightened activity of the body. The verbal Dharma, the scriptural Dharma, is enlightened activity of the speech, and all the mental blessings that the Buddha confers by meditating on concentration free from afflictions are an example of the enlightened activity of the mind, as happened during the *Heart Sutra*.

What are the benefits of reflecting on the qualities of the Buddha? One benefit of is that one generates the aspirational faith of wanting to attain the state of enlightenment for oneself. For some individuals this sometimes acts as the conducive condition for the generation of bodhicitta. Another benefit is that one will behold buddhas continuously day and night. One will remember the Buddha at the time of death and one will be able to generate a pure refuge in the Buddha.

If one reflects on the qualities of the Dharma one can simply reflect on the fact that the Buddha arose from the practice of the Dharma, in this instance, being the qualities of cessation and the truth of the path. All buddhas came about by generating this Dharma in their mindstream. One can also relate this to the Sangha because the Sangha are those who have generated the truth of cessation and the truth of the path in their mind. By contemplating the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in various ways one will generate strong faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. In this way one will be able to generate pure refuge.

That covers the first point, going for refuge by knowing the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Then comes the second point taking refuge by knowing the distinctions of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Going for refuge by knowing the distinctions between the three refuges. In the Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path this is done in six outlines.

The first is the distinction of the definition of the individual refuges. The definition of a Buddha is to be completely enlightened. To be completely enlightened

means to be omniscient because, on the one hand one has purified all obscurations and, on the other hand, one has comprehended all objects of knowledge. That is contained within the word 'awakening'. One awakens to the whole of reality and this implies that one is free from all faults. One has also completed the practices of abandonment and realisation.

The Dharma is the result of the Buddha's enlightenment. This is related to the occasion of the Buddha teaching the first five disciples. After the Buddha became enlightened he turned the wheel of Dharma. The turning of the wheel of Dharma by the Buddha is the direct result of his enlightenment

The Sangha are those that accomplish the Dharma of the Buddha. So some distinctions of the enlightened activity of the Buddha are the conveying of the qualities of abandonment and realisation to others and the practicing by the Sangha of those qualities.

Do you have a question for tonight? If you don't have any questions I will continue.

Question: My question is about the phrase "turning the wheel of Dharma". Why is that particular expression used to describe the Buddha giving teachings?

The wheel is used as a symbol for the Dharma. There are different parts of the wheel and they represent different parts of the Dharma.

For example the hub is the higher training of morality, the spokes are the higher training of concentration and the rim is the higher training of wisdom. The wheel can basically go anywhere on the ground, and similarly the Dharma can overcome all obscurations.

Question. What can you say to someone who has a gambling problem?

It depends on whether he's winning or not. *(laughter)* If the person is winning then there is not really much that you can say. If they are losing a lot of money then right there you have a chance to say something. If the person is losing a lot of money you need to say things that counteract the habit of gambling. It needs to be something that counteracts the habit. If the person is winning then there's not much you can say.

Question: I'm trying to do a Tara sadhana, but since the Chenrezig initiation I'm torn between the Tara sadhana and the Chenrezig sadhana. Do you have any suggestions?

You can meditate according to what you prefer. You can also choose one practice as the main practice and use the other one as a supporting practice. You can mainly do the Tara practice and use the Chenrezig as a supporting practice or do Chenrezig as the main practice and use Tara as the supporting practice. When you do a retreat you concentrate on just one.

Question. Geshe-la, why is it, do you think, that some people might be drawn to Green Tara and other people might be drawn to Chenrezig or particular types of deities? Is it a karmic thing or a personality thing? What do you think?

It can be through the imprints of the past life; what one practiced in a past life for example. Generally one uses

Chenrezig to meditate on the generation of bodhicitta and then intermittently to perform actions for others and so forth. Then one uses Tara. What do you prefer?

Questioner: I prefer the Green Tara. Sometimes it's easier to learn certain prayers or you just kind of feel...

Sometimes also one feels greater affinity for one deity because of one's view. Maybe you are attracted to Tara because you are female. Sometimes people have a greater affinity for a deity depending on whether they are male or female. These days there is, perhaps, a stronger identification in that way. Male practitioners may feel more comfortable with practising a male deity and vice versa. But if it gives you a greater feeling when practising it that it is good. If a woman was to be elected Prime Minister of Australia then all Australian women would greatly rejoice. *(laughter)* That's also why the Buddha said. "Son of good family and daughter of good family". In tantra there are many male and female deities. There is a purpose for that.

Question. Geshe-la, what is a yidam?

The etymology would be "that which binds the mind". So by, for example, practising Tara sooner or later one's mind will become bound to the deity.

As was explained earlier, focus the mind internally and then place it single-pointedly on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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