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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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We can meditate a little bit as usual. You need to seat yourself in an upright position. As I always say, meditation primarily happens in the mind and refers to the generation and protection of pure mental states, or pure mental habits. That is what meditation basically is – training the mind in virtuous mental states.

One comes to know the benefits of training the mind in pure mental states, in wholesome mental states, through one's own experience. The benefit of making the mind more wholesome and pure is something that one comes to appreciate and see for oneself through one's practice.

One has certain mental states that one knows make it very easy to be friends with others. They are the type of mental state that naturally attracts others to one and that enable one to get on easily with others and so forth. But there are also mental states that do the exact opposite. They cause others to distance themselves from one. If these mental states are predominant then even one's friends become distant because these mental states are not conducive for interacting harmoniously with others. As one knows from one's own experience they are mental states that cause others unhappiness.

As one's own mind is not stable, if another person for whatever reason frowns or has an expression of dislike, it immediately has a negative effect on one's mind. One immediately feels put down or disliked and that creates unhappiness. But if another person is smiling and has an expression of friendliness one feels exactly the opposite. As it is for oneself, it is the same for others. There are certain mental states that are conducive to one's happiness, and there are certain mental states that are not conducive to one's happiness. It is important that one identifies the pure, wholesome, virtuous mental states and that one fosters and develops them and takes care that one doesn't lose them. Pure wholesome mental states are priceless because they provide what one wants. One wants happiness and one's happiness is generated from pure, wholesome mental states. Therefore generating wholesome mental states is priceless.

Ordinarily, if one does not look after one's mind well unhappiness arises in the mind. As one goes about one's daily life the mind goes from one unwholesome mental state to the next. When the mind encounters unpleasant objects the mind generates anger. If one encounters pleasant objects the mind generates attachment. If one has company that is equal to oneself one generates competitiveness towards them. If one's company is higher than oneself one generates jealousy. If they are lower than oneself one generates pride. In this way,

throughout the day, many different unwholesome mental states are generated in the mind. This makes it very difficult to have space for wholesome mental states to arise.

Therefore it is very important to focus the mind internally and train it in virtue and wholesome mental states. One can counteract the process of generating unwholesome mental states by not allowing the mind to engage the external objects that generate these unwholesome mental states. Instead one focuses the mind internally on a meditation object. This overcomes the problem of the generation of unwholesome mental states and one can train the mind in wholesome mental states.

By focusing the mind internally one creates the space to train the mind in virtuous mental states such as love and compassion. Initially one focuses the mind internally and then places it single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. Meditating on the breath pacifies the over-conceptualising mind. Implicitly this also temporarily pacifies the different disturbances of anger and attachment and generates a calmness and space in the mind where one can meditate on a more definitive antidote. For example, one can then meditate on love and compassion as the antidote of anger after having calmed the mind through meditating on the coming and going of the breath. Meditating on love and compassion will not eliminate anger immediately so one should not expect the anger to go away immediately but, over time, it will lessen the anger. Tonight, for our purposes, we meditate on the coming and going of the breath because I think a good immediate goal for us is to pacify the coarse conceptualising mind.

Meditation on the coming and going of the breath is also a good preparation for tantric practices. In tantric practices one meditates on the psychic channels and the psychic energies. Meditating on the coming and going of the breath is a good preparation for that meditation.

Initially you have to seat yourself in an upright position because if the body is upright the channels in the body are straight and upright and this facilitates the free flow of psychic energies in those channels. This, in turn, facilitates a stable meditation focus. Once sitting upright turn the mind inwards and don't engage external objects. Instead focus the mind inwards and, after having focused the mind completely inwards, place it single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. The focus of this placement on the coming and going of the breath should not be in a dual manner. The mind should enter the breathing and become one with the breathing. *Pause for meditation.*

To have a stable and a clear mind is something that is desirable both from a worldly point of view as well as from a Dharma point of view. One can perform worldly activities better if the mind is stable and clear. While it might not seem harmful to leave one's mind distracted and out of control for some time, the problem is that the mind gets very acquainted with that state. Then, as time passes, one finds it very difficult to do anything with a stable and a clear mind and it becomes very difficult to

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concentrate well. It pays to look after one's mind well. From the point of view of the Dharma there is no need to mention that it is better to have a stable and a clear mind.

Wherever one goes, one will always go together with one's body, speech and mind. There's always the self, and then there is the body, the speech and the mind. As one is always together with one's body, it is good if one feels physically well. The way one expresses oneself plays a great role in how one will be regarded by others. One can recognise the character of a person by the way the person speaks. If one speaks pleasantly to others that will be regarded very well by others. We already spoke about the benefits of a virtuous and wholesome mind. If one feels physically well and if one's physical actions, one's speech and one's mind are wholesome and agreeable to others, one can have a comfortable life.

#### **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 in going for refuge**

We have completed four of the 8 benefits of going for refuge. The first of four benefits were first of all, that one becomes a Buddhist, secondly that one will become the basis for all vows, thirdly that one purifies past non-virtue, and fourthly that one accumulates vast stores of merit.

On the basis of having a good refuge one can take many different sets of Buddhist vows. The better, the stronger, one's refuge is the better one can purify lots of non-virtue. There are stories of practitioners who committed one or more of the five immediate, negative actions and heinous crimes but were still, on the basis of taking refuge, able to attain the state of liberation. One also accumulates vast stores of merit. If all the merit that one accumulates by going for refuge were to be transformed into form then all of space would not be enough to hold that form. Then, of course, to be regarded as a Buddhist, it is important that one has a strong refuge.

The **fifth** benefit is that by having refuge one will not be harmed by humans and non-humans. This refers to a heartfelt refuge and not just a verbal refuge. For example, when one recites the Tara praises and takes refuge in Tara from the depth of one's heart, then not only is one protected oneself but those that one prays for, in our case those participating in the Commonwealth Games and the audience that watch the Games, will be protected. Somebody once had a car accident and their car was totally destroyed but they were not injured and survived because of the recitation of Shakyamuni Buddha mantras.

Once in India a person was practising to achieve Ishvara. When he had achieved his practice Ishvara gave him a type of magical lasso with which he could pull back anything he wanted. It was a type of wish-fulfilling lasso. Because it was his wish to have many disciples and to

have power over others, he used the lasso to bring many people who had only a verbal refuge in the Buddha, but not have a heartfelt refuge in the Buddha, under his power.

One day he tried to bring one more Buddhist lay person, a girl, under his power. He had "hooked" all of his disciples, but the lasso wouldn't 'hook' the girl. It didn't catch her and at one point the lasso was actually making prostrations to the girl. So he went to the girl and he asked her, "Until now I could subdue anybody with my lasso. Why didn't it work on you?" The girl said, "Well, I do not have any specific qualities but I do have pure refuge. I go from my heart for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha". He also asked her whether she possessed any specific powers of mantra because in his system, to gain any kind of power, one usually has to be trained in mantras and spells. And she said, "No, I've never studied anything. I don't have any kind of mantric power. He was very surprised because in his system it was not possible to gain any kind of power without having some kind of mantra.

We can stop here and we can also leave the questions and answers for today. As we said earlier, turn the mind inwards and place it single-pointedly on the mantra.

I'm stopping early today because I want to watch the opening ceremony (*laughter*). So there is some personal wish.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

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