
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. Please seat yourself in a comfortable and relaxed posture. It is important to recall that one should meditate in order to not lose one's concern for the welfare of others. It is very important that one does not lose one's concern for the welfare of others, which one loses when the mind is disturbed by disturbing thoughts.

Once sitting upright and comfortably in a good position, collect the mind internally, direct the focus internally and stop engaging external objects. Completely focus the mind towards the inside and then, from within that space, place the mind single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. The placement on the breath should be in a non-dual manner whereby the mind enters the breath and becomes one with the breath. We can meditate in that manner for a few minutes. *Pause for meditation.*

It is important that one meditates in accordance with one's ability of the mind. If one tries to exceed the ability of the mind and tries to push too much and be greedy in one's meditation it won't work. One has to see how long one can stay focused comfortably and just meditate for that amount of time, whether it is five minutes or three minutes or two minutes. By meditating comfortably according to the ability of one's mind then, over time and naturally, the meditation will increase and the manifest afflictions will naturally cease more and more. If one is able to meditate for just a few minutes, for just three minutes, the temporary cessation of the manifest afflictions will have a very profound effect on the mind. One will feel quite different after one's meditation. But if one goes against the ability of the mind it will be counterproductive.

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 already said that going for refuge on the basis of initially recalling the qualities of the three jewels is very important. It is very important advice. To this end one has to consider how the Three Jewel can rescue one.

Here it describes the sequence of thought leading to this point. Initially one recollects that death is definite and that after death one does not become non-existent but one

will continue. When one continues after death there are only two possibilities - up or down. On the basis one's present karma one is most likely going to go down. As a result one generates fear of going down after death and one looks for a refuge that can prevent one from falling down after death. One then naturally arrives at the three jewels. The train of thought goes further and one then asks, "Well, how does refuge in the three jewels actually prevent me from falling down?" That is the next logical question. One has to understand not just how to go for refuge but how one is actually helped by the three jewels.

In an anthology of advice composed by an arhat it is said that that which frees one from samsaric sufferings, that which cuts the samsaric sufferings, is the truth of the path. Abandonment of samsaric sufferings, i.e. the truth of cessation, is attained by depending on the truth of the path. These two, the truth of cessation and the truth of the path are the actual Dharma Jewel. I have already explained to you how to practise the path. All you have to do now is to follow that explanation.

The Buddha is the teacher who showed the actual refuge, the Dharma is the actual refuge and the Sangha are one's example for practising the path. If one attains the Dharma refuge, the Dharma jewel, one will be liberated from cyclic existence because the Dharma jewel is the truth of the path and the truth of cessation.

Initially one takes refuge and then trains in the advice of acceptance and rejecting that comes with refuge, which is acting in accordance with the law of cause and effect. First one contemplates the law of cause and effect and then acts in accordance with it. Through this one will rescue oneself from the lower realms. This is how one is rescued in accordance with the practises of the lower capable being.

By thinking about the four noble truths and what has to be accepted and what has to be abandoned, one will attain liberation from cyclic existence. This is how one is rescued in accordance with the practises of the medium capable being.

The state of unification of method and wisdom, where mere method is compassion or bodhicitta and wisdom is the wisdom realising emptiness, is the ultimate antidote that rescues one from the fears of existence and peace. Also from the Mahayana point of view, the Dharma refuge is the actual refuge.

The ultimate Dharma refuge is the infinite Dharmakaya. It contains the final truth of cessation, which is the abandonment of the two obscurations, and the ultimate, truth of the path, which is the omniscient transcendental wisdom seeing all phenomena of multiplicity and suchness. This is the final stage of one's spiritual journey.

Then it goes on to say, and this is very important, 'Well, how does one get there? How does one reach these attainments? How does one reach the result of the infinite Dharmakaya?' One reaches it by going step by step, abandoning individual faults and generating individual qualities. This is very important because it explains how the Buddhist path works. It is a characteristic of the Buddhist path that one does not attain high realisations

spontaneously all at once, or by having them bestowed from above. One reaches a very high status by starting where one is and dealing with individual faults and developing individual qualities. In this way, gradually over time, by lessening more and more faults and developing more and more qualities one reaches the final Dharmakaya.

Everybody possesses individual qualities and everybody has stopped a certain number of faults. There's nobody who has not stopped a certain amount of faults and who does not have certain qualities. That is one's starting point from which one can set out to abandon more and more faults and to develop more and more qualities. Therefore one needs to very clearly identify the difference between virtue and non-virtue and the results of virtue and the results of non-virtue. Then one should practise them exactly as it is explained in the sutras.

Therefore one needs to consider very carefully the two karmas and their results and then engage in the practice of acceptance and rejecting accordingly. What it means is that one should not only understand the different karmas and their effects intellectually but that that knowledge should be translated into the practice of adopting and rejecting. This brings us to the next chapter.

If one does practise in such a manner one will not reverse the cause of rebirth in the lower realms. If one does not reverse the cause of rebirth in the lower realms, one will not be rescued from the lower realms. One is still in danger of falling into the lower realms and will still experience fear of the lower realms and their danger. Therefore one has to turn one's mind away from non-virtue and place it in virtuous states.

One should not just contemplate karma and its effects but translate that into practise. In order to be able to practise one needs to have faith in karma. One needs to have faith that a happy result arises from a virtuous cause and that suffering arises from a non-virtuous cause. Dependent on having faith in the law of cause and effect one can practise the law of cause and effect.

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2. Developing the faith of conviction in karma and its effects, which is the root of all happiness and goodness

This has three points:

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1. Thinking about the law of cause and effect in general

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.2. Thinking about the law of cause and effect in particular

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1.3. The way of practising acceptance and rejecting.

These three outlines are contained within the meditative session and the post-meditational period. From one point of view one's whole life can be divided into the meditative session and the post-meditational period. It can be divided into the stage of thought and into the stage of action. Every action is preceded by thought.

The first two outlines, thinking about the law of cause and effect in general and thinking about the law of cause

and effect in particular, are the stage of contemplation. This would be the meditation session. The way of actually engaging in the practice of accepting certain actions and rejecting certain actions would be the post-meditational period. Out of thought and action it is the stage of action. To just meditate on the law of cause and effect alone is not enough. It needs to be complemented by subsequent concordant action.

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1. Thinking about the law of cause and effect in general

This has two parts:

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1.1. The actual way of contemplating karma in general

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1.2. The individual explanation.

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1.1. The actual way of contemplating karma in general

This comes in four points:

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1.1.1. The definiteness of karma

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1.1.2. The increasing factor of karma

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1.1.3. That one does not experience result of karma not created

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.2.1.1.4. That the potency of karma does not dissipate

We can start with these four points the next time.

This outline is referred to as 'Contemplating Karma in general' because these four characteristics: that karma is definite, that karma increases, that one does not meet an effect of karma that one didn't create and that karma never exhaust itself, are four general factors that apply equally to both virtuous and non-virtuous karmas. Regardless of whether the karma is virtuous or non-virtuous, it will always possess these factors; it is definite, it increases, one will not experience an effect if one did not create the cause and karma does not lose its potency.

Different questions arise from the last point. "If karma does not lose its potency why do we have to dedicate? How can virtue be destroyed? How can non-virtue be purified?" These different debates come up. The fourth factor, that karma does not lose its potency, means that if the karma does not encounter certain conditions it will not just dissipate just by itself. If virtue meets with anger the virtue lessens. And if non-virtue meets with purification, then the non-virtue lessens. But if they are just left they will not fade away by themselves.

If, for example, one does not have faith in the definiteness of karma one will not be inspired to engage in small virtuous actions or to avoid even small non-virtuous actions. Wanting to create big karmas in order to achieve big results, but neglecting little karmas, is actually a sign that one does not have faith in the definiteness of karma. It is said that in order to be inspired to abandon even small non-virtuous karma or to create even small virtuous karmas one needs to have faith in the definiteness of karma.

In one way one can say the practice of karma means to be an upright person who is honest to others. It means to be

an upright person who treats others honestly.

The definition of *karma* is the mental factor of intention, which makes it a consciousness. Of the different types of mental factors it is a more pertinent one because it pulls the concomitant main consciousness to a certain object without any freedom. Sometimes if one sees a certain object with one's eye-consciousness one automatically acts in a certain manner. That is because of the mental factor of intention.

So in one case the mental factor of intention draws its accompanying main consciousness involuntarily to an object of virtue. In another case the mental factor of intention pulls its accompanying main consciousness involuntarily to an object of non-virtue. In the third case, it pulls its accompanying main consciousness involuntarily to a neutral object. Here you already have the threefold division of karma into virtue, non-virtue and neutral, or non-predicted.

If you analyse your mind you will find that all the time the mind is being involuntarily drawn to certain objects and to react in a certain manner. That is because of karma. One always says that a person cannot help himself or herself. They are just compelled to act in a certain manner because of karma.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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