



Dhargyey Buddhist Centre

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Title:- Lob.jong Mind Training

Venue: D.B.C. Dunedin

Thursday 4 August 2011

lob jong

We have covered the first two of the seven main points and the 3rd one is transforming misfortunes or crises into path to Buddhahood. This is done in two ways with the attitude of Bodhicitta mind generation, and transforming with the action of gathering merits. Together it is better to say to transform through expanded mind, you increase the capacity of mind.

Transforming crisis into path to Buddhahood through expanded mind has two parts:

1. activities or action
2. view

It does not have a particular clear cut sections nevertheless transforming through action is done in three steps:

1. Not to allow bad condition, crises or misfortunes to become obstacles of virtue or virtuous practice.
2. To use crises as spiritual aides to virtue.
3. To use crises as Bodhicitta booster or as aides to boost Bodhicitta.

If I explained these in detail it would take a lot of time. They were explained before.

Transforming through right view:

When you transform crises through expanded mind through right view the first is to consider the three actions involved in the experience of crises. They are actions, agent and the object in relation to which or whom the action is taken. You consider these three factors as empty of any intrinsic nature. The first way of transforming through view is most effective. The second way is to consider all vicissitudes of life, happy and good times are nothing more than a dream. Indeed when we breathe our last like a dream that finishes when we wake up, all human experience pass when we die. When you consider good and bad times like they are like dreams, you take out heat out of bad conditions.

Transforming misfortunes into path through the action of collecting merit:

1. Gather merits
2. To clear away or purify yourself of obstructions
3. Giving *torma* offering to the harmful spirits
4. To ask help of Dharmapalas, or protectors of Dharma.

These can be done in two stages:

The first is to gather merits and to purify yourself of obstructions at a time when you experience misfortunes so that not only do you experience at that time the misfortune of your karma but you also receive the misfortunes of all sentient beings. To this end, you gather merit and you do purification so that the bad conditions of the crises of all sentient beings like your own, fall on you.

The second is you give ritual cake or *torma* offering to spirits and you ask Dharmapala not only that you experience your own misfortune but that the crises of all sentient beings are brought onto you. You develop courage to withstand crises and then thrive amidst difficult times. To gather merits so that you transform crises into spiritual catalyst. Before this you have done *tonglen* practice whereby out of intense compassion you visualise receiving suffering and causes of suffering of all sentient beings and out of intense love you visualise giving your goodness to all beings. Having done that at a visualisation level it is as if you have sent a strong wish for such a thing to happen. When you experience misfortunes you gather more merits so that your wishes

made during *tonglen* practice of receiving crises and suffering of others onto yourself really materialise. They materialise in the actual crises that is now hitting you.

The third is giving torma to malicious spirits. When you experience trouble or difficult times you receive or face that difficult time as a promise being fulfilled as a result of your *tonglen* practice before. Then think these malicious spirits help you realise your wish to receive the suffering of others. You give them more cakes to appease them so that they can heap more crises and difficult times on you and then thank them for a great job done.

The fourth is asking help of Dharmapala. Here you think that when some crises strikes you it is a sign that Dharmapalas are responding to your *tonglen* practice done previously. As you wished they have picked up on your wish and now they are doing their best to bring you the trouble of all sentient beings. As you experience them hail them as a blessing of the Dharmapala and then ask for more so that your ultimate *tonglen* wishes are fulfilled.

These four things done in two stages and in particular the second two of the four are done by *tongeln* practitioners who have reached a higher standard of practice. For beginning practitioner these four can be done mainly to stave off difficult times and crises. You gather merits so that your practice may not be undermined by crises. You purify yourself of obstacles so that your practice goes smoothly. You give torma to malicious spirits to stay away. You ask Dharmapala to help avert problems in your practice.

4. Explaining practices of one lifetime in an integrated way

This is done by way of five forces: five forces to be practiced in life and five forces to be practiced at death. Generally speaking this has reference to practicing Bodhicitta but this also could have reference to the practice of tantra. What are the five forces?

1. The force or power of intention
2. The force of familiarity
3. The force of pristine virtues
4. The force of aversion
5. The force of prayer

These five forces can become lifelong practice, or be practiced as a matter of urgency at the time of death can be done on a daily basis, or they can be applied to any practice daily or intermittent whenever you do it. In these ways, these are quite encompassing. These five are done mainly with regard to Bodhicitta practice, to apply them to a day:

1. The force of power of intention

The first force of intention could be generated when you wake up. The moment you wake up you think 'today I will do my best to uphold Bodhicitta. To this end I will not allow self-cherishing thought to overpower me. Instead I will be proactive in exercising other-cherishing.' You set the tone or you programme the mind.

2. The force of familiarity

Not only do you set out such motivation based on Bodhicitta but you meditate on Bodhicitta, you ground what you do during the day in Bodhicitta and become more and more familiar with selflessness that is in Bodhicitta.

3. The force of pristine virtue

Pure virtue or pristine virtue power means during the day whatever practice you do, whether reciting the main mantra of Buddha, your guru's or you reciting the mantra of your deity, whatever virtues you do, you do them so that they help you generate Bodhicitta afresh if you haven't. If you have generated Bodhicitta they help you sustain it. If you sustain Bodhicitta they help you augment it.

4. The power of aversion

The power of aversion means to become averse to anger and destructive negative emotions or thoughts that otherwise undermine your Bodhicitta. You apply a series of antidotes to such negative emotions becoming averse to them and to what they do.

5. The power of prayer

The power of prayer at the end of the day means that when you take some time to review your performance and if you can find some virtues as you have intended during the day then dedicate such virtue to further strengthening of Bodhicitta.

Whatever topic you practice whether renunciation, Bodhicitta or whatever you meditate on, if you can do such a practice within the framework of these five forces, they will ensure that your practice is one of quality. Let me talk about the five power practiced at the time of death which is an important time. If the five forces are practiced at the time of death then it could be the best or potent form of transference of consciousness to higher realms. This can take place through (1) mind training practice, (2) through guru yoga, (3) through the right view, (4) through tantra, particularly taking Dharmakaya, Sambogakaya and Nirmanakaya as the path. Whilst application of five forces at the time of death could become the practice of transference of consciousness it is not an easy time with luxury of time and most people do not succeed. Now is the time to have some form of this up your sleeve and prepare now rather than leaving it to the time of death. There is a raft of practices that could help develop the power of transference of consciousness. This can be done through common perfection vehicle practice or through tantra practice. Whilst there are many options it is my belief the best practice of transference is to learn to transform your mind into the nature of your guru's omniscient mind right now. Get instructions of the practices that gradually lead to merge your mind with the guru's mind. That I believe is the most potent transference of consciousness practice. It has to be done for the sake of all sentient beings. If you succeed in merging your mind or fusing it with the gurus' omniscient mind for the sake of all sentient beings then that really meets the Bodhicitta practice criteria. At the time of death if you choose to do guru yoga as the transference of consciousness practice and what I have just explained to you really encapsulates what guru yoga is all about.

It also captures taking three kayas as path to achieve them. Normally anyone who undertakes this practice they say mantras like PEH or HIK, whether you do or not, if only you are serious about wanting to unite your mind with that of your guru, whether you say them or not this fulfils the essence of the transference of consciousness practice. It also fulfils it through right view, because if you can unite your mind with that of your guru because the gurus mind is always in meditative equipoise on right view. If you could die with this practice then there is no doubt that you will have a sublime rebirth. For that to happen you need to get ready now and for that you need to see that your mind is non-dual with the deity, with the guru, in other words your mind, your deity and your guru are inseparable.

How do you do such a pithy practice of path at death through five forces?

When you know you are sure to leave this world and then you practice the first power of intention, and that is to resolve that you will not let yourself become attached to your relations, family, wealth or anything. You say, 'I will not allow myself to become attached to anything' and set out that motivation. The power of familiarity is to become familiar and to recall guru yoga practice mentioned above, and then fall back on it. The practice of pure virtue is to channel the power of any virtue that you have done in this life to the success of Bodhicitta practice. The power of aversion is to become averse to the thought self-cherishing attitude and your bad actions as disturbing gurus' mind, harming guru and so on, and then purify yourself of allowing yourself to be influenced by self-cherishing attitude or having gone against the guru's advice or instructions. The power of prayer at the point of death is then to dedicate any merit from any virtue that you have done and collected in your life to meeting with the practice of Bodhicitta and to be able to resume your Bodhicitta practice where you left off last life and so on, then dedicate all your virtue to meet up with this practice again and again.

What is most detrimental at death is clinging attachment and we must be most careful. There is an anecdotal case of a monk during Buddha's lifetime who owned only a begging bowl. When he died he was attached to

his bowl and as a result he was born a snake within the bowl. Other monks could not imagine what a snake in a bowl was doing and they were scared of the snake and referred the matter to the Buddha. He said some prayers and the snake came out of the bowl and went into the bushes. When it was made to go and find its way through the bush and thus it was removed from its prized object, it became very angry and through the heat of anger it caught fire, died and went down into the hell realm. Three cremations happened at one time for one person because the monk died and was cremated; then when it was reborn as a snake to claim the bowl, when the snake was helped to the bush it got angry and caught fire that consumed its body. It was reborn in hot hell realm where again his body was ablaze.

I gave you this narrative to tell you how detrimental clinging attachment is at the time of death and how careful we need to be at that time. We need to prepare right now so that when you are about to breathe your last somebody who can help you can recite your guru's name, your deity etc. so that when they do then you are able to do that critical pithy practice of uniting your mind with that of the guru. What I have just shared with you is extremely important and you have taken profuse notes, please go through them and don't be complacent that you have notes and go back to watching TV. They won't help you unless the content is written in the mind. I am not suggesting that I am up here and ready and well prepared. I am in the same boat as you all are but I do know what is important and therefore I wanted to share what I think is extremely important.