



Dhargyey Buddhist Centre

Teacher:- Venerable Geshe Jampa Tenzin Title:- Sunday Meditation Venue: D.B.C. Dunedin

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Please participate in this discourse with the highest motivation to attain Buddhahood so that one can be of endless benefit to all sentient beings. Think to yourself, to this end I will listen to this teaching.

It is obvious for all of us that we humans have a far superior cognitive development and abilities and thus we need to use this special ability for long-term benefit. Although it could be used for temporal benefit but being far-sighted we need to use it for long-term benefit for ourselves and other people. Despite this special faculty we have, if we can't think more than basic necessities of life and maybe fame and renown then we have not risen above basic animal instinct. We have not been able to tap into our special resource and developed maximally. It is a great waste of human potential and ability if by being simply engrossed in material pursuit of happiness we die in the same way as cats and dogs, an ordinary death. They would not have achieved anything beneficial for themselves and others in this life. If we fail and die an ordinary death then we would not have done anything different to animals and that would have been a great waste. In fact, all religious traditions talk about what we need to do for the long term and to move us towards higher, lasting state of physical and psychological well-being. Therefore we are spoilt for choice as there are so many religious traditions that cover the same topics. It is up to one to choose a spiritual tradition that suits your aptitude and mental traits. Then check and read the life story of past great beings as they have worked hard and what they have achieved and then model one's own life on such great beings.

We have gathered here to talk about a Buddhist system of spiritual development and evolution whereby if one evolved spiritually one gains various abilities that can be used to help other beings to achieve the same capacities and states of well-being. In Buddhism there is a huge body of teaching, so much to choose from you could spend your entire life and not cover it. In spite of that there is The Stages of the Path that presents a clear cut map and guidelines for one to grow spiritually. When we talk about *lam rim* we do so covering four major outlines and I have briefly covered the first three and now in the fourth sections, things really begin:

Section 4:

How to guide spiritual friends like yourselves and disciples on the path through actual instructions and guidelines.

Lam rim are a body of teaching that seek to generate in others three spiritual realisations and they are called:

1. A sense of disenchantment with mundane existence and yearning for permanent liberation;
2. It seeks to develop Bodhicitta;
3. It seeks to generate the right view.

Lam rim teachings begin with a discourse of how to develop a smooth working relationship between the teacher and students which is considered vital for spiritual development subsequently. Whereas when you consider your human life and talk about the many aspects of human life, how it is extremely precious and rare, how it is hard to get in all lifetimes, despite its preciousness once found it is easily lost and highly perishable. These topics are geared towards steering the mind of the listeners towards spiritual practice. In *lam rim* there are three stages, path of beginners and path of the middling practitioners – the practices of these two categories of people are aimed at helping generate a sense of lasting disenchantment with regard to mundane life and cyclic existence. When you talk about many virtues and benefits of developing Bodhicitta and all subsequent topics that follow, that are meant to generate Bodhicitta in us that we have not developed or reinforce Bodhicitta if one has developed it. Much later on there is a topic called Special Insight into Reality which is the process of developing right view. In this way *lam rim* covers the above three points. Once a person has

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systematically gone through the topics which are organised this way, in time the person will come to develop these three things. Once they developed these three main spiritual realisations or paths, then the practitioner can move on to train in the stages of tantra. This is the process of spiritual training in Tibetan Buddhism and in particular in this order.

How to lead spiritual disciples on the path of actual instructions

Today we are going to launch into the 4th section that has two main sections.

1. Training in the development of a positive relationship of with a spiritual mentor.
2. How to train the mind in the stage of the path after having developed a relationship with the spiritual mentor.

This foundation of the spiritual path Lama Je Tsong Khapa, 15th Century Tibetan master, called the relationship with the spiritual mentor, or called it the ground of all spiritual realisations, or the supreme spiritual field. He obviously considers this a crucial beginning. When you develop a loving relationship with the teacher or guru then you receive blessing from the lama. This is not a tangible thing that you can see, nor can it be logically proven. It is something that you can't describe but when it happens it is amazingly powerful and everything falls into place for you to grow spiritually. The guru is a critical person with whom one develops and maintains a loving relationship and receives teaching from that person, and then spiritual miracles will happen.

For example, in ancient India, the great beings like Naropa, the great Indian Mahasiddha, and in Tibet there was Milarepa of the Kagyur order of Tibetan Buddhism, these and many other beings attained the state of Buddhahood in single lifetime, which is supposed to take an incredible length of time. The reason why they attained Buddhahood in one lifetime is put down to their relationship with their guru and their devotion to maintaining it and doing the practices that were taught by their gurus. If you look at this from another point of view it becomes clear that a spiritual relationship with a guru has amazing power and it can cut through things that are usually hard to overcome. Generally we suffer from ignorance of grasping of ourselves, the true existence of a person. Thinking this and that self and others have an intrinsic nature in and of themselves is a basic misconception and this has been with us throughout beginning-less time and this has become so deeply entrenched. To rid our mind of this we would need as much time as it took for it to become embedded. If you are successful to remove this through a matter of a few lifetimes it is thanks to the blessings of the guru. Here, Lama Je Tsong Khapa said, 'when you try to memorise something you can't remember anything, if you try to reach some realisation, nothing happens, then you have no option but to turn to the guru who is the fertile field of spiritual realisation.' These difficulties, remembering words, understanding topics or gaining realisations, can be overcome through the power of field of guru. This is a pointed reference Lama Je Tsong Khapa makes regarding the importance of a spiritual relationship with a spiritual friend.

When we talk about this guru-disciple relationship according to the great *lam rim*, it covers this topic with 3 sections:

1. the characteristics of the guru to turn to;
2. the characteristic of the disciples that could be transformed;
3. Their relationship.

Here I base my teaching on the *lam rim* called Red Guidance or red teaching which is a way of saying stark guidance on the path, the teachings is presented and nothing is covering it. Here are 2 sections:

1. What to do in your meditation session on the topic
2. What to do in the post-meditation time.

There are special advantages to divide one's lifetime practice into these 2 sections.

What to do in the actual session when you are in actual session of meditation on a topic like guru-disciple relationship:

1. Preliminaries.
2. Actual meditation
3. How to end the session.

The topic is guru yoga – guru-disciple relationship. Before you meditate on this actual topic, some preliminaries would do a power of good to make the meditation effective. We need to do the 6 preliminaries that are important preparations. A lot of people here would have heard about this but I will go through them briefly:

1. To tidy up the place of meditation and set the altar with statues, scriptures and stupas representing Buddha's body, speech and mind. Sweeping rubbish and dirt away from the place is important and has a lot of benefits. The Buddha himself never failed to do it and he taught his disciples to do the same.

There is a story of a Buddhist monk called Phagpa Lamchung, the Small Path, who in the beginning had great difficulties in learning anything at all. He was given a practice for his mind to become more receptive that involved cleaning of the monastery. He did that and as a result his mind became more receptive and thus he became a great realised being.

At the end of the Prajnaparamita, the last chapter is called the Ever-Crying Bodhisattva (Taktu ngu (Tib.) or Sadaparudita (Sanskrit)), despite many Buddhas appearing to him he was never satisfied and he needed to see his guru, Dharmodara. He received assurance that he would be able to see him after he comes out of a deep meditation on emptiness and would be teaching to a large gathering of beings. His disciple tidied the place of teaching but there was no water, so he used his own blood to lessen the dust. This shows that cleaning the place of meditation is very important.

To make it the importance of doing this clearer: in both common and un-common tantric vehicle tidying up is highly recommended. All scriptures advise us to do this. In tantra you have to consider the place of meditation a celestial mansion where the deity resides, the mandala. This has to be clean – outer or inner mandala. If you take this seriously it pays rich dividends in that the process of tidying and making it comfortable for mind and body, whether your house or in a mandala, it is a good way of creating causes to be reborn in a Pureland. Secondly what you do in these terms also paves the way to achieve your own future Buddha field. When you become Buddha yourself, you have a perfect, pristine, clean and comfortable environment. With perfect disciples, imperfection is unheard of. Cleaning up the place is the starting point to experience such Buddha fields in the future. Apart of what I have just said, scriptures mention 5 specific benefits of

1. When your place is tidy it is aesthetically beautiful, it appeal and generate a sense of delight.
2. Tidiness in one's own place will cause delight in others' hearts.
3. When your place is tidy, deities you invoke to visit your site of meditation would feel at home.
4. It creates karma for good looks in the future.
5. It creates karma to be reborn in celestial realms after discarding this human body at death. This means not the mundane celestial realm but a Pureland.