



THE ASIAN CLASSICS  
INSTITUTE

3

APPLIED MEDITATION  
Level Two of the Steps to Buddhahood (*Lam Rim*)

DHARMA ESSENTIALS





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## Class One Outline

- I. Introduction to the Dharma Essentials Series and to this Course
- II. Terms for and Types of Meditation
  - A. Terms: *gompa* (Sanskrit: *bhavana*); *samten* (Skt. *dhyana*); *nyomjuk* (Skt.: *samapatti*); *shine* (Skt.: *shamatha*); *ting-ngen-dzin* (Skt.: *samadhi*); *nyamshak jetup*
  - B. Types of Meditation and Objects of Meditation
    1. Review
    2. Analytic
    3. Fixation
- III. An Overview of the Parts of Meditation
  - A. The six preliminary activities
  - B. The six conditions for an ideal meditation environment
  - C. The correct posture for meditation
  - D. The actual mental process during meditation
  - E. The object of meditation
- IV. The Six Preliminaries and the Seven Ingredients
  - A. Clean room and set up altar
  - B. Offerings
  - C. Sit in proper position
  - D. Visualize Holy Being
  - E. Gather virtue and purify obstacles (The Seven Ingredients)
    1. Mental prostrations
    2. Mental offerings
    3. Confession and purification
    4. Rejoicing
    5. Request teachings
    6. Request teachers to stay

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### 7. Dedicate goodness

#### F. Request Blessings

### V. Preliminary Steps to Meditation in Practice Order

- A. Clean room and set up altar
- B. Make offerings
- C. Sit in proper position
- D. Take refuge and generate bodhicitta
- E. Visualize Holy Being
- F. Gather virtue
  - 1. Mental prostrations and offerings
- G. Purify obstacles – The Four Forces
  - 1. Foundation
  - 2. Destruction
  - 3. Restraint
  - 4. Remedy
- H. Rejoice in good you or others have done
- I. Request teachings
- J. Request teacher to stay
- K. MAIN MEDITATION
- L. Dedication

### VI. Meditation Assignment

Do a review meditation for fifteen minutes each day on the preliminaries (in practice order).

## Class Two Outline

- I. The Six Conditions of the Environment
  - A. Stay in a conducive place
  - B. Live simply with few needs
  - C. Be satisfied with what you have
  - D. Give up being too busy
  - E. Maintain an ethical way of life
  - F. Get rid of desire for worldly things and desires
  
- II. The Eight Part Posture
  - A. Legs
  - B. Eyes
  - C. Back
  - D. Shoulders
  - E. Head
  - F. Teeth and lips
  - G. Tongue
  - H. Breath
  
- III. Introduction to the Lam Rim: *Source of All My Good*, by Je Tsongkapa (1357 – 1419)
  
- IV. Lam Rim: The Root of the Path
  - A. How to Take a Teacher
    - 1. Developing faith in Him/Her
      - a. How to serve Him/Her in your thoughts
      - b. How to serve Him/Her in your deeds
    - 2. Develop reverence by remembering His/Her kindness
  
  - B. Taking the Essence of Life: Leisure and Fortune
    - 1. Recognize our leisure and fortune
    - 2. Contemplate how very important they are
    - 3. Contemplate how hard they are to find

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- V. Lam Rim: Steps Shared with Those of Lesser Scope
  - A. Develop concern for the next life through awareness of death
    - 1. Death is certain
    - 2. Time of death is uncertain
    - 3. At the time of death, nothing but one's spiritual development will be of use
  - B. Contemplate the suffering of lower rebirths as an animal, craving spirit, or hell being
  - C. Use methods to achieve a higher rebirth in the next life
    - 1. Going for refuge
    - 2. Contemplating the laws of karma

## VI. Meditation Assignment

Having done the preliminaries, meditate for fifteen minutes each day on the Lam Rim up through the *"Steps Shared with Those of Lesser Scope."*

## Class Three Outline

- I. The Five Problems of Meditation, and the Eight Corrections
  - A. Laziness
    - Correction:
    - 1. Feel attracted to meditation by understanding its benefits
    - 2. Decide you want to be a good meditator
    - 3. Make the efforts needed
    - 4. Experience the pleasure and ease that comes from being good at it
  - B. Losing the Object (forgetting the instructions)
    - Correction: Remembering (bring the object back to mind)
  - C. Dullness and Agitation (gross and subtle)
    - Correction: Watchfulness
    - 1. Gain fixation, clarity, and intensity
  - D. Failing to take action
    - Correction: Take action
    - 1. Correct for mental dullness
      - a. Tighten up your concentration
      - b. Shift concentration to an uplifting object – then return
      - c. Break meditation and stretch, walk around, etc. – then return
    - 2. Correct for mental agitation
      - a. Loosen up your concentration
      - b. Shift your mind to a sobering object – then return
      - c. Go back to counting your breaths
  - E. Taking action where none is needed
    - Correction: Leave well enough alone
- II. Lam Rim: Steps Shared with Those of Medium Scope
  - A. Develop the Wish to achieve Nirvana
    - 1. Establish what Path leads to Nirvana
    - 2. Contemplate the nature of this suffering life
      - a. Being born
      - b. Getting old
      - c. Getting sick

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- d. Dying
  - e. Having to encounter things we don't like
  - f. Having to lose things we do like
  - g. Trying to get what we want and not succeeding
  - h. We have taken on a mind, body, and other parts which must suffer
3. Contemplate the cause of our suffering life
- a. Desire
  - b. Anger
  - c. Pride
  - d. Ignorance
  - e. Destructive doubts
  - f. Ignorance about our own nature
  - g. Belief in one of the two extremes
  - h. Belief that one's wrong views are the best
  - i. Belief in excessive spiritual practices
  - j. Belief in wrong world view
4. Contemplate how to get out of this suffering life
- a. The training of morality
  - b. The training of meditative concentration
  - c. The training of wisdom

### III. Meditation Assignment

Meditate fifteen minutes each day: review the preliminaries and Lam Rim steps up through *"Steps Shared with Those of Medium Scope."*

## Class Four Outline

- I. Nine Stages of Meditation
  - A. Placing the mind on the object
  - B. Placing the mind on the object with some continuity
  - C. Placing the mind on the object and patching the gaps
  - D. Placing the mind on the object closely
  - E. Controlling the mind
  - F. Pacifying the mind
  - G. Pacifying the mind totally
  - H. Making the mind single-pointed
  - I. Achieving equilibrium
  
- II. Developing Quietude (*shamatha*) and Insight (*vipashyana*)
  
- III. Lam Rim: Steps Shared with Those of Great Scope
  - A. Developing the Wish for Enlightenment
    - 1. Practice the Seven-Step Cause and Effect found in books of Lord Atisha
    - 2. Practice Exchanging Self and Others found in books of Master Shantideva
  
  - B. Training in the Deeds of a Bodhisattva once one has developed the Wish: Training oneself in the Open Ways
    - 1. The Six Perfections (Giving, Morality, Forbearance, Joyful Effort, Meditative Concentration, Wisdom)
    - 2. Train Oneself Specifically in the final two Perfections to achieve Quietude and Insight
  
  - C. Training in the Deeds of a Bodhisattva once one has developed the Wish: Training oneself in the Secret Ways
  
- IV. Lam Rim: Concluding Prayers
  
- V. Meditation Assignment

Spend fifteen minutes each day meditating on the complete Lam Rim.



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Dharma Essentials III: Applied Meditation

Reading One:

The Six Preliminaries to Meditation, and the Seven Ingredients

The following selection is taken from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path (Lam-rim chen-mo)* written by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419). This part of his work is a commentary on a special prayer called the *King of All Prayers, the Prayer of the Realized One, Deeds of All Goodness*.

[1] ...The first preliminary to meditation is to make the room tidy and clean; then set up a beautiful altar, with representations of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind.

[2] The second preliminary is to go and find offerings that you obtain without using any dishonest means. Put them forth in an attractive arrangement.

[3] ...The third preliminary is to seat yourself on a comfortable cushion, sit up straight, and assume a full lotus position with your legs (a half lotus is also acceptable). In this pose then, set your mind deep into the thoughts of taking refuge, and the wish for enlightenment.

[4] The fourth preliminary is to visualize the garden for gathering the power of good. In the space before you, imagine the Lamas of both the far-reaching lineage, and the lineage of the profound view. Together with them are an inconceivable mass of Buddhas, and bodhisattvas, listeners, self-made Buddhas, and protectors of the Dharma.

[5] It is extremely difficult to bring the path to grow within the stream of your mind if all you practice is the various principal causes. You also need the

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Reading One

supporting causes for the path to grow; you need to gather together the different factors that are conducive to the path and you need to clean yourself of the factors that are obstacles, the ones that oppose the path. Therefore you must train your mind in the Seven Ingredients, which include in them all the critical points for gathering good and cleaning away obstacles.

[a] The first ingredient is prostration. There is one kind of prostration that combines all three doors of expression. It is found in the verse [from the *King of All Prayers, the Prayer of the Realized One, Deeds of All Goodness*] that includes the words “Whosoever they are, as many as there may be.” [The full verse reads:

I bow down, and purely,  
In body and speech and mind,  
To all those Lions of living kind,  
Whosoever they are,  
As many as there may be,  
To those Who are Gone;  
Gone in the past,  
In the present or the future,  
On any of the planets  
In the ten directions of space.]

Here we are not talking of a Buddha on a certain planet in a certain direction of space, nor are we talking of a Buddha of a particular time; our prostrations rather are directed at each and every Victorious Buddha, those who live in every one of the ten directions of space itself—those who have already come before, those who are going to come in the future, and those who now are here. Don't do your prostrations just to go along with the crowd; do them rather out of deep respect, from the depths of your heart....

[b] This brings us to the second ingredient: offering. The offering which does have something higher is found in the two verses that contain the words “holy flowers.” [The full verses read:

I make offerings  
To all of these  
Victorious Ones;  
Holy Flowers, holy garlands,  
Cymbals and ointments,  
The highest parasol,  
The highest lamp,

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And holy incenses.

I make offerings  
To all of these  
Victorious Ones;  
Holy silken clothing,  
The highest scent,  
And a mountain of incense powder  
High as Meru—  
All set forth  
In a way more lovely  
Than any other thing there is.]

...The other kind of offering is the one which does not have anything higher. This one is found in the single verse which includes the words, "Any and every offering." [The full verse reads:

I see as well  
Any and every offering  
Unsurpassed, reaching far and wide,  
Handed up to every Victor;  
By all the power of my faith  
In the Deeds of Goodness may I truly  
Bow down and make offerings  
Onto all the Victors.]

Offerings which we say "have something higher" are those of worldly beings. Therefore the offerings made in this verse consist of all the many wondrous things that very powerful beings, such as bodhisattvas, are capable of emanating with their mind....

[c] The third ingredient is confession and is found in the single verse with the words "like and dislike." [The full verse reads:

I confess, one by one,  
Each and every one  
Of all the wrong deeds  
I may have committed  
In action or word,  
And also thought,  
Motivated by like or dislike,

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Or by dark ignorance.]

This refers to what was done with one of the three mental poisons as its cause; and with my body or of the rest as the vehicle; and with a nature of having been committed, either directly by myself, or by someone else at my bidding, or by someone else with my gladness that it was done. The words "all the wrong deeds I may have committed" are meant to include all these elements.

Try to bring to mind all the problems that these deeds will bring you, and so feel regret for whatever you have done in the past, and a sense to restrain yourself in the future. Then make your confession. Doing this prevents any future wrong from starting at all.

[d] The fourth ingredient is rejoicing, and is found in the one verse with the words "Victors in any of the ten directions." [The full verse reads:

I rejoice  
Over every single one  
Of the good deeds ever done  
By beings in any of the ten directions:  
By all of the Victors,  
By all of their Sons and Daughters,  
By those Self-Made,  
By those on the paths of learning,  
By those on the paths done learning,  
By anyone at all.]

Try to think about the great goodness that comes from the virtuous deeds of these five different kinds of holy beings, and dwell in a sense of gladness, like a beggar who has stumbled across a mine of gold.

[e] The fifth ingredient is urging holy ones to turn the Wheel of the Dharma. This is found in the one verse with the words "Who in all the ten directions." [The full verse reads:

Lamps who light  
Each of the worlds  
In all the ten directions  
Of space;  
Those who have taken  
Each of the steps

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To Buddhahood,  
And so reached  
The state beyond desire,  
The Buddha's enlightenment;  
Saviors I urge You all,  
Turn the Wheel of the Dharma,  
Nothing is higher.]

This verse is addressed to those who in paradises in all the ten directions of space have but only recently found Buddhahood in the Buddha's perfect enlightenment—who have reached the state beyond desire, a knowledge which goes anywhere it wants, unstoppable. We are urging them to send forth an equal number of bodies, to come and teach the Dharma....

[f] The sixth ingredient is supplication, and is found in the one verse which contains the words “pretend to pass into nirvana.” [The full verse reads:

I press my palms at my breast,  
And make this supplication  
To all of those who may intend  
To pretend to pass into nirvana:  
Stay, I pray to help all beings  
And bring them to happiness;  
Stay for eons equal in number  
To the atoms of every world.]

Here we are making supplication to all those in worlds of the ten directions of space who might pretend to pass into nirvana. We are requesting them to stay, ultimately to bring all beings help, and in the interim to give them happiness. We ask them to stay, and not to pass on, for eons equal in their number to all the atoms that make up the various worlds of the universe. We make our supplication, praying that they will remain, in bodies beyond all counting.

[g] The seventh ingredient is dedication, which is found in the verse with the words “prostrations and... “ [The full verse reads:

I dedicate  
To my future enlightenment  
All my merit,  
Whatever little goodness  
I may have gathered here

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By bowing myself and offering,  
By confessing and rejoicing,  
By urging and supplication.]

Here we are taking all the virtuous seeds within us, represented by the goodness we have accomplished in practicing the six ingredients that have already come, and dedicating them as a cause for the full enlightenment of ourselves and every living being, together. Make this dedication with tremendous will, and the power of your good will flow forever, and never finish....

[6] For the sixth and final preliminary, refresh your visualization, and make an offering of a mandala. Then make a request that the Lamas bless the stream of your mind. Ask Them to help you stop, quickly, everything from disrespecting your Spiritual Guide on up to grasping to some ingrained self-nature, in either of its two forms. Ask Them to help you develop, smoothly, every single kind of thought which is perfect and unmistaken; everything from respect for your Spiritual Guide, on up to the realization of suchness, the fact that nothing has any nature of its own. And ask them finally to help you put a final end to all the things, within you or outside of you, that might obstruct your spiritual progress.

Make this supplication over and over, many times, with fierce hopes for its success.

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Reading Two

Reading Two:

The Six Conditions for Developing Quietude; and the Eight-Part Posture

The following selection is taken from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path (Lam-rim chen-mo)* written by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).

**The Conditions for Developing Quietude**

The explanation of how to train yourself in each of the two [quietude and special sight] has three parts: how to train yourself in quietude, how to train yourself in special sight, and how the two are joined in union. The first of these parts itself has three sections: how to gather together the conditions for quietude, how to meditate on quietude after you have gathered together these conditions, and how to know when your meditation has actually brought you to quietude. The first is described in the words, "Holy practitioners should first gather together the conditions for quietude: the causes that will allow them to develop quietude quickly and easily." Here there are six different conditions.

[1] The first condition is to do your meditation staying in a place which is conducive for it. The place should have five different qualities:

- a) It should be a place with things that are "easy to find," in the sense that you can find food, clothing, and other necessities without any trouble.
- b) It should be a "good place," in the sense that there are no fearful creatures like wild animals or the like, nor any persons like enemies who would try to harm you.
- c) It should have a "good environment," in the sense that the environment doesn't cause any kinds of sickness to develop in you.
- d) There should be "good friends" there, in the sense that your companions in the place share your sense of morality, and your world view.

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e) The place should "have goodness," in the sense that, during the day, there should not be many people around and, during the night, there should not be many sounds.

As the *Jewel of the Sutras* says,

The place where intelligent people practice  
Should have things that are good to find,  
It should be a good place, with a good environment,  
A place where good friends stay,  
With all the practitioner needs, with ease.

[2] The second condition is that you keep your wants few; you have no great attachment to things like fine robes, or a lot of things, or the like.

[3] The third condition is that you are easily satisfied; you always feel like you have enough, even if all you can find is robes or the like that are the worst.

[4] The fourth condition is that you give up trying to do too many things. You give up undesirable actions like business; you avoid being too familiar with laymen or monks; you stop practicing the minor arts of medicine, astrology, or the like.

[5] The fifth condition is that your morality is perfectly pure. With regard to your vows of individual freedom, and your bodhisattva vows, you never break down the foundation of your training, the things you have been taught that are naturally wrong to do, and those that the Buddha has prohibited. If out of a lack of attention you do commit such deeds, you are quick to regret them, and you try to make up in the proper way.

[6] The sixth condition is that you totally rid yourself of the stupid thoughts of desire and the rest. You meditate on the problems of desire in this life—how it can bring you to death, and to bondage; and you meditate on the problems it brings you in the life after—a birth in the realms of misery, or the like. Or else you can meditate on how each and every one of these pretty things in the suffering cycle of life is going to end; how quickly it disappears; how surely it will be torn from me before very long. Try then to get accustomed to thoughts like this: So why do I find myself caring at all about these things? What use are they for me? Use these to rid yourself of every stupid thought of desire.

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I have explained all these following the *Stages of Meditation*; for a more detailed presentation, you can refer to the *Levels of Listeners*. These six include in them all the essential points, all the causes and conditions you need to know to first develop good concentration; and to keep from losing it once you have developed it; and to bring it to an ever higher and higher state. The most important points here are that you keep your morality pure, and that you realize all the problems of desire, and that you stay in a place which is conducive to meditation.

Geshe Tonpa has said, "When we find ourselves unable to develop deep concentration, we blame it on the instructions we got, and we go and look for some different ones. The real reason though is that we fail to do the gathering." Here "gathering" refers to the six conditions and so on that I have explained above.

We can also say that the first four of the perfections function as conditions for the fifth perfection, of meditation. The first book of the *Stages of Meditation* says,

If you want to reach quietude quickly, then make great effort: don't be concerned with a desire for things; keep your morality well; and be ready to undergo whatever pain or such you must. This is in fact why texts like the exalted *Commentary of the True Thought* teach that giving and the rest are causes for each of the perfections above them.

*A Lamp for the Path* says as well,

You may try meditation as hard as you can,  
But if the parts of quiet are lost  
You may sit and practice for thousands of years  
And never achieve this deep concentration.

Therefore those who are really serious about achieving the state of concentration where quietude ("quiet") and special sight are joined must make special efforts in the various "parts" or conditions of concentration, for example in the thirteen conditions outlined in the *Levels of Listeners*. These conditions are absolutely vital for your success.

### **The Eight-Part Posture**

[1] ...As for the legs, one should sit in a full lotus, similar to the full-lotus position of the holy being named Vairochana. It is also quite acceptable to sit in a

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half lotus position.

[2] One's eyes should be loosely focused around the plane of the tip of the nose, and neither opened too wide nor completely closed.

[3] Avoid having your body lean too far back or too far forwards: straighten up your spine, and sit there directing your thoughts within.

[4] The shoulders should be even, on a straight line.

[5] The head should be kept erect: neither tilted down nor up, nor pointed off to the side. The nose should draw a straight line to the navel.

[6] Leave your teeth and your lips in their normal, natural position.

[7] The tongue should be kept close to the palate, behind your upper teeth.

[8] As for the breath, see that it makes no noise as you breathe it in. Don't let it be too rough, and don't just remain thoughtless about it. Try to reach a point where you can hardly tell when it is coming and going; where it runs very slowly and effortlessly....

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Readings Three and Four

Readings Three and Four:  
The Five Problems of Meditation, the Eight Corrections, and the  
Nine States of Meditation

The following is a translation of a special chart on the stages of meditation designed by Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche (1901-1981), tutor to His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, and Root Lama of Khen Rinpoche Geshe Lobsang Tharchin. (For the chart, see *Appendix Two*.)

It has been spoken that each and every high spiritual quality of all three ways is a result of meditation, either in the form of quietude (*shamatha*), or some state which is close to it. The benefits of meditation are many, beginning with the fact that—once you have attained quietude—then any virtuous practice you undertake becomes extremely powerful. It is an absolute necessity, and so attaining the state of quietude is extremely important for any deep practitioner who really hopes to reach freedom.

And here is how to do it. A meditator must first seek out all six of the conditions that support the attempt to reach quietude. Then they should acquaint themselves with the five obstacles to one-pointed concentration; these are explained, in Lord Maitreya's work entitled *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes*, as not feeling like meditating, losing the object, dullness and agitation, failing to take action, and taking action when there is no need to do so.

The corrections for the first of these obstacles are a deep belief in the benefits of meditation, a strong desire to master it, the physical and mental pleasure of a person who gets good at meditation, and the hard work needed to get good at it.

The correction for the second obstacle is to bring the mind back to the object. The correction for the third problem is watchfulness, and the correction for the fourth is taking the necessary action. The correction for the fifth problem is to leave well enough alone. Thus one must attain quietude through undertaking eight different corrective actions.

It is further stated that—if you come to understand how these can be divided into nine mental states, and how these in turn are achieved through six different powers and grouped into four modes of focus—then you can quite easily attain a state of single-pointed concentration which is perfect.

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The text called *The Essence of the Middle Way* includes a verse that says,

Master the elephant of the mind  
Step by step, as follows:  
He wants to go the wrong way,  
So be sure to tie him to the stake  
Of the object of your meditation  
With a strong rope made of bringing  
The mind back to your object;  
Then finally use the iron hook  
Of your wisdom to take control.

Here the process of learning to meditate is being compared to the way in which you tame a wild elephant, and this is the point of the illustration above. Here I will give you just a rough explanation of each of the steps you see here.

The nine mental states are as follows: setting the mind on the object; keeping the mind on the object with brief continuity; keeping the mind on the object with patches where you lose the object; maintaining the mind tightly on the object; controlling the mind; quieting the mind; completely quieting the mind; attaining single-pointedness; and reaching deep meditation.

Here is how you use the six powers to attain these nine states. The first of the states is attained through the power of learning the instructions for meditation from your Lama. The second is reached through the power of contemplating these instructions. You achieve the third and fourth mental states through the power of bringing your mind back to the object. The fifth and sixth are attained by the power of watchfulness. The seventh and eighth you bring about through the power of effort, and the ninth with the power of complete habituation.

Here is how these nine are grouped into four different modes of focus. During the first and second mental states, you focus by forcefully concentrating the mind. Over the course of the middle five states, you focus in a stream, but with interruptions. In the eighth mental state you focus in an uninterrupted stream, and during the ninth you focus on the object completely effortlessly.

The final result of attaining these nine states, one by one, is that you reach an unshakeable state of physical and mental meditative pleasure. Simultaneous to achieving this pleasure, you attain a state of quietude which is taken in by the

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preparatory stage of the first concentration level, [which is the meditative platform needed to see emptiness directly.]

Suppose that, after achieving quietude in the way described above, you go on to meditate one-pointedly upon the profound worldview of the middle way, reaching a balance in your practice between the ability to analyze reality and the ability to hold your mind fixed in meditation on the conclusions gained from your analysis. This analysis will automatically enable you to reach an extraordinary level of physical and mental meditative pleasure—and it is at this point that we can say you have attained the special insight into reality (*vipashyana*), in its authentic form.

If you practice these instructions correctly, then you will gain the razor-sharp sword of wisdom, a form of one-pointed concentration where quietude and special insight (*shamatha* and *vipashyana*) are married together. You can then carry this mighty sword onto the field of battle, and as time goes by smash the two great obstacles [those to achieving nirvana, and those to achieving total enlightenment]; that is, you can eliminate within you every undesirable quality. With this you will win the great victory of the four bodies of a Buddha, and find yourself able to perform enlightened deeds, constantly and spontaneously, without any conscious thought—fulfilling the hopes of every living creature, for as long as space itself endures....

*The following is a list of the scenes found in the middle of the block print chart just described. [For the chart, see Appendix Two.]*

[1] 1) Setting the mind on the object

[2] Bringing the mind back to the object

[3] Watchfulness

[4] The six bends in the road represent the six powers. The first represents the power of learning the instructions. Based on this, one achieves the first mental state.

[5] The elephant represents your mind, and his black color symbolizes dullness.

[6] The monkey stands for distraction, and his black color represents agitation.

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[7] The presence of the flames, and their relative size, from this point up to the seventh mental state represent the relative amount of effort needed to bring your mind back to the object, and the degree of watchfulness needed.

[8] The power of contemplating the instructions. You use this to reach the second mental state.

[9] 2) Keeping the mind on the object with brief continuity

[10] The gradual increase in the white patch from this point on, starting with the elephant's head, represents a gradual increase in the clarity and fixation of the mind.

[11] This symbol stands for the five objects of the senses, which themselves represent the various objects that agitation focuses upon.

[12] The power of bringing the mind back to the object. This allows you to attain the third and fourth mental states.

[13] 3) Keeping the mind on the object, with patches where you lose the object.

[14] Subtle dullness. From this point on, you are able to recognize the distinction between obvious and subtle dullness, and other such details.

[15] The monkey looking back represents the ability both to tell when your mind is wandering, and to re-focus it upon the object of meditation.

[16] 4) Maintaining the mind tightly on the object.

[17] The power of watchfulness. This allows you to reach the fifth and sixth mental states.

[18] Agitation is the first of the two that loses its power to appear in your mind. When you are trying to develop quietude, even allowing your mind to be distracted to a virtuous object becomes an obstacle, and you must seek to stop it. When you are doing other practices though you do not have to stop it. And so we see the monkey reaching for the fruit of a second activity.

[20] Watchfulness will not let the mind get distracted; and uplifting your heart leads you to a state of one-pointed concentration.

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[21] 5) Controlling the mind.

[22] 6) Quieting the mind.

[23] The power of effort. This allows you to reach the seventh and eighth mental states.

[24] 7) Completely quieting the mind. At this point it is difficult for even subtle forms of dullness and agitation to occur. Even if they do come, you are able to eliminate them immediately with a minimum of effort.

[25] Here the fact that the elephant has lost all the black, and left behind the monkey as well, represents your ability to engage in one-pointed concentration in an uninterrupted stream: if you apply just a little effort to bring your mind to the object and maintain watchfulness, then dullness, agitation, and distraction can no longer interrupt your meditation.

[26] 8) Attaining single-pointedness

[27] The power of complete habituation, which enables you to reach the ninth mental state

[28] 9) Reaching deep meditation

[29] Achieving quietude [*shamatha*]

[30] Physical meditative pleasure

[31] Mental meditative pleasure

[32] Special insight [*vipashyana*] and quietude [*shamatha*] marry together, focusing on emptiness, and allow you to cut the root of this suffering life.

[33] One goes on to seek the correct view of reality, with a great ability to bring the mind to the object, and to maintain watchfulness.

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The following selection is taken from the *Great Book on the Steps of the Path (Lam-rim chen-mo)* written by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419)

### **The Nine States of Meditation**

Here is the third division, which is a description of how one achieves the nine states of meditation using the steps explained above. Anyone who hopes to practice meditation must become proficient in these nine states; and to become proficient in them, one must know what they are. So here is an explanation of the nine states, which are called (1) placing the mind on the object; (2) placing the mind on the object with some continuity; (3) placing the mind on the object and patching the gaps; (4) placing the mind on the object closely; (5) controlling the mind; (6) pacifying the mind; (7) pacifying the mind totally; (8) making the mind single-pointed; and (9) achieving equilibrium.

Here is the first state of meditation, called "placing the mind on the object." You achieve this state by means of receiving instructions from your lama about the object you should use for your meditation. The mind at this point stays on the object only from time to time, and for the most part is not fixed on the object at all: you are unable to keep your mind on the object for any continuous length of time. The two mental functions of noting and examining are present, and due to this you often lose yourself to scattering and agitation. You become aware of this condition and so you get the impression that you have even a greater problem of too many thoughts coming up to your mind than you ever had before. What's really happening though is not that you have more of these thoughts than before; it's just that you have now become aware of the problem.

Here is the second state of meditation, called "placing the mind on the object with some continuity." This state is reached when you practice placing the mind on the object enough that you can now keep your mind on it for some continuous, although brief, period of time. You could say it would be like being able to keep your mind from wandering for as long as it would take to do one round of the *mani* mantra on your rosary. At this point your problem of having too many thoughts goes away for a while, and then comes back for a while, so the impression you have is that these thoughts are making a periodic resurgence. This particular state of meditation is achieved through contemplating.

During these first two states of meditation, you have an abundance of dullness and agitation, and only occasionally fix your mind on the object. Therefore at this point we say that your mind is in the first of the four mental modes, the one described as having to "concentrate to focus." During these stages, said our

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Lama, the periods of distraction last longer than the periods in which the mind is fixed on the object.

Here is the third state of meditation, called "placing the mind on the object and patching the gaps." The place where you put a normal patch is a piece of cloth; here the place you put the patch is the continuation of your focus. What this means is that you catch your mind quickly after it wanders away from the object, and so "patch" the hole in the continuation. The difference between this state of meditation and the two that come before it is in the length of time you are distracted. Our Lama also noted that this is the time when you are able to develop your recollection to a high degree.

Here is the fourth state of meditation, called "placing the mind on the object closely." Since by now your recollection is highly developed, you are able to place your mind on the object of meditation in such a way that it is no longer possible to lose it completely; this then is what differentiates this state from the three before it. Even though you are succeeding in keeping the object from being lost, nonetheless dullness and agitation are present in your mind, and they are very strong. Therefore you must at this point apply the correction for dullness and agitation. These two levels, the third and fourth, are achieved by means of recollection. Our Lama noted that from this point on the power of our meditation was complete, or full-grown, like a person who has reached maturity.

Here is the fifth state of meditation, called "controlling the mind." There is a tendency during the fourth state to draw your mind too far inside, and there is a great danger that this can lead to subtle dullness. Therefore we must now develop our watchfulness to a high degree. It goes and spies on the mind, and finds something wrong; in response then we must uplift the mind by thinking over the many benefits that single-mindedness can bring to us. The difference between this state and those before it is whether or not obvious dullness can occur.

Here is the sixth state of meditation, called "pacifying the mind." The great danger at this point is that subtle agitation occurs, as a result of uplifting the mind too far while in the fifth state. Whenever this subtle agitation comes, you must raise up a powerful kind of watchfulness to detect it; realize that even very subtle agitation is a serious fault in your meditation, and stop it. What distinguishes this stage from the one before it is whether or not there is a great danger of having subtle dullness. These last two states, the fifth and the sixth, are

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achieved by means of watchfulness. From this point on, said our Lama, the power of our watchfulness is complete.

By the time you reach the seventh state of meditation, which we call "pacifying the mind totally," your recollection and watchfulness are total, and so it is unlikely that dullness and agitation are going to occur. At this point you must bring your effort up to a powerful level; see how destructive even subtle forms of dullness and agitation are, and do whatever you can to eliminate them altogether. The difference between this state and the ones before it is whether or not you should worry much about slipping into subtle dullness or agitation. Although there is no great danger at this point that subtle dullness and agitation will occur, you must still make great effort to implement the various methods for eliminating them. While you are in the fifth and sixth states of meditation, you still have to be concerned whether or not dullness and agitation are going to attack you. Here in the seventh state though you have the ability to initiate the effort necessary to block them; and so, said our Lama, dullness and agitation are unable to attack and create an obstacle. During these last five states of meditation—that is, from the third through to the seventh—the mind is for the most part in single-pointed meditation. Nonetheless, conditions such as dullness and agitation are interrupting ones concentration, and so we describe the mental mode during these periods as "engaging but interrupted."

Here is what happens when you reach the eighth state of meditation, called "making the mind single-pointed." When you begin a meditation session, you must still make a slight effort to bring up the various corrections. After that though you are able to go for an entire session without even the subtle forms of dullness and agitation coming up in the mind. These last few stages are like having an enemy who is at full strength, one who has lost part of his strength, and one whose strength is completely lost. Since these examples describe how dullness and agitation gradually lose their power, we can say that from the eighth state of meditation you no longer need to make any conscious effort to apply watchfulness. Because in this eighth state you can make a little effort at the opening of a meditation session and then pass the entire period without being interrupted by problems such as dullness and agitation, the mental mode at this point is described as "engaging without interruption." The seventh and eighth states of meditation are achieved through applying effort.

Here is the ninth state of meditation, called "achieving equilibrium." Here your mind is engaging in the object without any conscious effort at all. This state comes about as a result of having repeated the eighth state over and over until

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you are completely accustomed to it, and then you can go into meditation spontaneously, effortlessly. This is similar to the point you reach in your recitations when you can read out a text from memory without any effort, since you have practiced reciting it repeatedly. You go into single-minded meditation in a single swoop. This state of mind is for all intents and purposes a desire-realm form of single-pointed quietude. The ninth state is achieved through being totally accustomed.

The impression you have during the first state is one of recognizing that you have too many thoughts. In the second state you have a feeling that they are making a resurgence. By the third state the impression is that the problem of too many thoughts has in a sense tired out. In brief then we can say that in the first two states there is a question of how long the mind can stay fixed on the object. What distinguishes the third and the fourth states is whether or not one can lose the object or not. The fourth and fifth states are differentiated by whether obvious dullness can arise or not. The fifth and sixth states are separated by whether or not you have to be worried about subtle dullness coming up. Moreover, there is the distinction that—although it is possible for subtle agitation to occur during the sixth state—it is much less likely than in the one before it. The sixth and seventh states are distinguished by whether or not you have to be very concerned about slipping into subtle agitation or dullness. States number seven and eight are separated by whether there is any agitation or dullness at all; and eight and nine are differentiated by whether or not you have to rely on any conscious effort. The seventh level is devoted to eliminating dullness and agitation, rather than having to think about any serious danger that you could slip into them. Our Lama said that at this point it was like having a fist-fight with an enemy who was already weakened to the point of exhaustion; it's not like you need to be on your guard especially, it's enough just to be thinking about how to finish him off.

Appendix 1: The Source of All My Good

--1--

The source of all my good  
Is my kind Lama, my Lord;  
Bless me first to see  
That taking myself to Them  
In the proper way  
Is the very root  
Of the path, and grant me then  
To serve and follow Them  
With all my strength and reverence.

--2--

Bless me first to realize  
That the excellent life  
Of leisure I've found  
Just this once  
Is ever so hard to find  
And ever so valuable;  
Grant me then  
To wish, and never stop to wish,  
That I could take  
Its essence night and day.

--3--

My body and the life in it  
Are fleeting as the bubbles  
In the sea froth of a wave.  
Bless me first thus to recall  
The death that will destroy me soon;  
And help me find sure knowledge  
That after I have died  
The things I've done, the white or black,  
And what these deeds will bring to me,  
Follow always close behind,  
As certain as my shadow.

--4--

Grant me then  
Ever to be careful,  
To stop the slightest  
Wrongs of many wrongs we do,  
And try to carry out instead  
Each and every good  
Of the many that we may.

--5--

Bless me to perceive  
All that's wrong  
With the seemingly good things  
Of this life.  
I can never get enough of them.  
They cannot be trusted.  
They are the door  
To every pain I have.  
Grant me then  
To strive instead  
For the happiness of freedom.

--6--

Grant that these pure thoughts  
May lead me to be watchful  
And to recall  
What I should be doing.  
Grant me to give  
The greatest care  
To make the vows of morality  
The essence of my practice;  
They are the root  
Of the Buddha's teaching.

--7--

I have slipped and fallen  
Into the sea  
Of this suffering life;  
Bless me to see  
That every living being,  
Every one my own mother,  
Has fallen in too.  
Grant me then  
To practice this highest  
Wish for enlightenment,  
To take on myself  
The task of freeing them all.

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Appendix One

--8--

Bless me to see clearly  
That the Wish itself  
Is not enough,  
For if I'm not well trained  
In the three moralities,  
I cannot become a Buddha.  
Grant me then  
A fierce resolve  
To master the vows  
For children of the Victors.

--9--

Grant that I may quickly gain  
The path where quietude  
And insight join together;  
One which quiets  
My mind from being  
Distracted to wrong objects,  
The other which analyzes  
The perfect meaning  
In the correct way.

--10--

Grant that once I've practiced well  
The paths shared and become  
A vessel that is worthy,  
I enter with perfect ease  
The Way of the Diamond,  
Highest of all ways,  
Holiest door to come inside  
For the fortunate and the good.

--11--

Bless me to know  
With genuine certainty  
That when I've entered thus,  
The cause that gives me  
Both the attainments  
Is spoken to be  
Keeping my pledges  
And vows most pure.  
Grant me then  
To always keep them  
Even if it costs my life.

--12--

Bless me next  
To realize precisely  
The crucial points  
Of both the stages,  
The essence of  
The secret ways.  
Grant me then  
To practice as  
The Holy One has spoken,  
Putting all my effort in  
And never leaving off  
The Practice of the Four Times,  
Highest that there is.

--13--

Bless me, grant me that  
The spiritual Guide  
Who shows me this good road,  
And all my true  
Companions in this quest  
Live long and fruitful lives.  
Bless and grant me that  
The rain of obstacles,  
Things within me  
Or outside me  
That could stop me now,  
Stop and end forever.

--14--

In all my lives  
May I never live  
Apart from my perfect Lamas;  
May I bask  
In the glory  
Of the Dharma.  
May I fulfill  
Perfectly  
Every good quality  
Of every level and path,  
And reach then quickly  
The place where I  
Become myself  
The Keeper of the Diamond.



The Stages of Meditation

## Appendix Three

### The Steps to Buddhahood, and Finding a Lama

Expanded Outline to the Lam-Rim Source of All My Good

By Je Tsongkapa (1357 – 1419)

#### I. ROOT OF THE PATH: HOW TO TAKE A TEACHER

(Root text: Verse 1 – “*The Source of all my good...*”)

##### A. The root practice: developing faith in Him/Her

- i. How to serve Him/Her in your thoughts
- ii. How to serve Him/her in your deeds

##### B. Develop reverence by remembering His/Her kindness

#### II. HOW TO PURIFY THE MIND ONCE YOU HAVE TAKEN A TEACHER

##### A. Urging by the teacher that we should take the essence of this life

(Root text: Verse 2 - “*Bless me first...*”)

- i. Recognize our leisure and fortune
- ii. Contemplate how very important they are
- iii. Contemplate how hard they are to find

##### B. How to take the essence of this life

(Root Text: Verse 3 – “*My body and the life...*”)

##### i. TRAIN THE MIND IN THE STEPS OF THE PATH SHARED WITH THOSE OF THE LESSER SCOPE

###### 1. Develop concern for the next life

###### a. Stay aware of death, the fact that we will not be here long

- i. Death is certain
- ii. The time of death is uncertain
- iii. At death, nothing at all but Dharma can help us

###### b. Contemplate what will happen to us in the next life: the suffering of lower rebirths

(Root text: Verse 4 – “*And help me to find...*”)

- i. Animals
- ii. Craving spirits
- iii. Hell beings

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2. Use methods to achieve a higher rebirth in the next life
  - a. Practice how to go for Refuge, which is the door to enter the Dharma
    - i. The reasons for taking Refuge
    - ii. The places in which to take Refuge
    - iii. What you must do to take Refuge
    - iv. Various advices on how to act after taking Refuge
  - b. Develop the faith which believes, for this is the root of every goodness. Includes the four Laws of Karma
    - i. Karma is certain – good karma must cause pleasure; bad karma must cause pain
    - ii. Karma expands
    - iii. Karma not committed cannot bring consequences
    - iv. Karma when committed must bring consequences
- ii. TRAIN THE MIND IN THE STEPS OF THE PATH SHARED WITH THOSE OF THE MEDIUM SCOPE
  1. Develop the Wish to achieve Nirvana  
(Root text: Verse 5 – “*Bless me to perceive...*”)
  2. Establish what Path leads to Nirvana  
(Root text: Verse 6 – “*Grant that these pure thoughts...*”)
    - a. Contemplate the nature of this suffering life
      - i. Being born
      - ii. Getting old
      - iii. Getting sick
      - iv. Dying
      - v. Having to encounter things we don’t like
      - vi. Having to lose things we do like
      - vii. Trying to get what we want and not succeeding
      - viii. We have taken on a mind, body and other parts which must suffer
      - ix. Contemplate the cause of our suffering life
      - x. Desire
      - xi. Anger
      - xii. Pride
      - xiii. Ignorance
      - xiv. Destructive doubts

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- xv. Ignorance about our own nature
  - xvi. Belief in one of the two extremes
  - xvii. Belief that one's wrong views are the best
  - xviii. Belief in excessive spiritual practices
  - xix. Belief in wrong World View
- b. Contemplate how to get out of this suffering life
- i. The training of morality
  - ii. The training of meditative concentration
  - iii. The training of wisdom
- iii. TRAIN THE MIND IN THE STEPS OF THE PATH SHARED WITH THOSE OF THE GREATER SCOPE
1. Developing the Wish for Enlightenment  
(Root text: Verse 7 – *"I have slipped and fallen..."*)
    - a. Practice the Seven-Step Cause and Effect found in Books of Lord Atisha
    - b. Practice Exchanging Self and Others in Books of Shantideva
  2. Training in the Deeds of a Bodhisattva once one has developed the Wish
    - a. Training oneself in the Open Ways
      - i. Training in all the deeds of a Bodhisattva – The 6 Perfections  
(Root text: Verse 8 – *"Bless me to see clearly..."*)
        1. The Perfection of Giving
        2. The Perfection of Morality
        3. The Perfection of Forbearance
        4. The Perfection of Joyful effort
        5. The Perfection of Meditative Concentration
        6. The Perfection of Wisdom
      - ii. Train oneself specifically in the final 2 Perfections  
(Root text: Verse 9 – *"Grant that I may quickly gain..."*)
        1. Shamata // quietude (meditative concentration)
        2. Vipashyana // insight (wisdom)

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- b. Training oneself in the Secret Ways
  - i. Enter the Diamond Path, once you have made your mind a worthy vessel, and have taken the 4 Empowerments in a pure form  
(Root text: Verse 10 – “*Grant that once I’ve practiced...*”)
  - ii. How to keep the pledges and vows you committed yourself to when you took the Empowerments  
(Root text: Verse 11 – “*Bless me to know with genuine certainty...*”)
  - iii. How to meditate upon the two levels, now that you are keeping your pledges and vows pure  
(Root text: Verse 12 – “*Bless me next to realize precisely...*”)

III. REQUEST THAT YOU BE ABLE TO FIND THOSE CONDITIONS WHICH HELP YOU SUCCEED IN THE PATH AND THAT THOSE CONDITIONS WHICH PREVENT THIS COME TO AN END – help with practice  
(Root text: Verse 13 – “*Bless me, grant me that the spiritual Guide...*”)

IV. MAKING A PRAYER THAT IN ALL YOUR LIVES OUR TEACHER WILL COME TO GUIDE YOU, AND SO HELP YOU REACH THE PATH’S FINAL GOAL  
(Root text: Verses 14 & 15 – “*In all my lives...*” & “*May I fulfill perfectly...*”)