



The Eight Verses for Training the Mind

Origin: The root text was composed by Kadampa Geshe Langri Tangpa (Tibet, 1054–1123).

Podcast Episode #1: Introduction

Date & place: July 23rd 2015, Bisserup, Denmark

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Editing: C. Brems and M. Wendelboe

Synopsis: *Lakha Lama is setting the scene—or rather the mind—for the survey of and work with the Eight Verses for Training the Mind. In particular, Rinpoche points out the flexible quality of the mind that enables us to move our focus, which gives us the chance to act differently from what we might believe we would be capable of in the first place.*

TRANSCRIPT

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The purpose of being here [together] has nothing to do with that I am something very special. I have something to share that I want to share. Then we are talking about what kind of text we are going through: The Eight Verses [for Training the Mind].

The present time [of the year] is connected to time for summer holiday—officially it's summer holiday, and then we also need to have a mental holiday. Mental holiday means to be free from all these mental distractions. Is it possible? Yes! When we think it is not possible, then we make it impossible. As we are human, a very special living being, we should not waste too much time under the influence of [disturbing] emotions and illusions. We all have emotions, illusions, and we also have the disharmonic thoughts—yes, we have! But the main thing is whether we follow these or not. We also have [the power to take] that decision. Many are talking about happiness—what is happiness? Happiness is not allowing our thoughts that are creating unhappy feelings [to dominate]. In the Buddhist philosophy we do not have the word “happiness”. [We use] “comfortable” or “uncomfortable,” “comfort” or “discomfort.” So, if we are able to [generate] comforting feelings, then we become more relaxed. If we follow discomforting thoughts then we will feel quite unhappy feelings—feelings of unhappiness. So, the main point is that we have a great opportunity to comfort ourselves—it's independent comfort. I follow that. Therefore, I can share with you my personally [personal experience].

When some thoughts are rising, connecting to dissatisfaction, I don't stay with that. I move the focus to what I feel satisfied [about]. There are always two sides, the dissatisfaction side and satisfied side—they are always there. Happiness and unhappiness are always side by side. As long

as we do not move the focus towards what we feel good about, then only the feeling of “not good about” will dominate. So, the Eight Verses for Training the Mind [helps you to realize that] mind is not stiff! I will say that straight—the mind is very flexible. As the mind is flexible, we also have the possibility to move the focus, not getting stuck with one side. One can talk about something I am not very happy about, and then at the same time there is a point, something I am happy about. As long as we are not really moving the focus, then we get stuck with something we are not satisfied [with]. In one way you might think that it is very difficult to follow the Eight Verses, but if you think more deeply there is nothing [in it] that you cannot follow, that you cannot use. The practice of the Eight Verses is not a Buddhist practice. It is a mental practice for human beings, and not for the donkeys. Don't be a donkey! Be human!

The things that we are seeing and dealing with in life are mostly relative and connected to depending, not having so much view of independent. Depending on material things, technology, relations—so many things; depending, depending, depending... One can have good relations with other human beings, other beings, without depending upon them. One can achieve a deeper comfortable [feeling] without depending on... Material depending, money depending, surrounding depending, we are so dependent—like in Denmark, social dependency—there is so much making you too dependent on. I live in Denmark. I have a family and all kinds of practical things [to do]. Pia [Rinpoche's wife] is arranging and doing things—also economically or whatever. Do I depend on her? No, I don't! *I am thankful she is doing it.*

I was born in Tibet in a very poor family with four brothers who were also poor. All we had was a small shelter and a few animals. In my childhood I took the animals into the nature so they could get something to eat, grass and like that... So, this way I grew up in a way using my abilities and strength, not hanging on [to others]. In the philosophical way of speaking, not depending [means] interdependency—we need each other, not depend on each other. We need each other. Even the business people, they need each other. Even those who have a lot of knowledge and high education, they also need each other. They got their education, but if they were alone without others, then what would they do? Nothing! It would be boring. Even the Buddhist masters, who are great and highly developed masters, still they need those who will listen to what they can share. Do they need it for themselves to get some kind of more prestige? *They do not!* They need that other human beings can find more inner peace, inner harmony, and can develop more love and compassion.

As an example, when I meet with relaxed people it makes me feel relaxed. When I meet with not very relaxed people, with a more emotional and a kind of aggressive attitude or any kind of disharmonic attitude, I have two options. One is to feel very angry towards that person. Another option is, I feel sorry about this person. When you feel sorry about this person, another person, do you get angry...? [Feeling] “sorry” connects to some kind of good wishes. When you wish something good for another person, do you then feel unhappy or what...? There are always two ways to look at things, it is not only one way. That will help you to develop more mental flexibility. Otherwise, one becomes very narrow minded.

These things that I am talking about are more in general, but to get to see [realize] the Eight Verses we need to go a little deeper into the verses, and not just talking on the surface level. If you really go into the verses, there is a chance for you to relax even if you have a deadly sickness or you are facing something really heavy. I can see that chance and I use that being a human

being, not because I am something special. By that, it really reminds me to pay the faith and devotion to Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and my great masters like The Dalai Lama and other guiding masters. And, every day in the morning I feel very thankful, I'm alive, and tomorrow, I don't know. Better to wait! The time we have, the time we are alive, is a really really precious time. Illusive time is the future. Real time is the present. So, be present and be satisfied!

Discussion

Of course, I will start with the Eight Verses from tomorrow—today is more a kind of “first meeting”. And we have the summer holiday in connection with the society level—summer holiday... What does that mean—holiday? I don't know... Holiday...?

P:¹ *Doing something different from what you usually do.*

R:² *But still it is not a day off...*

P: *To do what you feel like.*

P: *Not working.*

R: *Mental day off...? Summer holiday—mental day off...?*

P: *No..., if only...*

R: *Holiday is holy—that is what I am thinking off... Why do we call it holiday?*

P: *Isn't it because we have brought together a lot of holidays that we call it summer holiday...?*

R: *Yea yea—summer in Mallorca... It is quite strange how we give it [holiday] an identity.*

P: *To many people vacation time usually also is connected to time for reflection—at least to me it is... Most people probably find themselves at some point during their vacation, sitting there all of a sudden looking at the whole thing, asking themselves, what is to happen next when they get back. So, reflection and vacation or holiday seem to be somewhat connected...!?*

P: *So, if there is a lot of sunshine the reflection is...?*

R: *In the Tibetan monasteries we have this day off, we don't call it holiday. That day we call “shingdong” (Tib.), which means that the monks [and nuns] have to go out to collect wood for the fire. Therefore, the monastic program was not on that day.*

P: *It's just a comment to “what is holiday vacation” and the [Danish] commercial for the train: “Out to See with DSB”, there were some people who were asked what kind of mental vacation they were going to have. One was going to have a mental vacation from having a guilty conscience about being inactive, and another a vacation from fear... Now that we are asking the question, “what to have vacation from...?”*

R: *It might be something in the society; you need to have a job, you need to work eight hours a day and being too much occupied with job, job, job and hours—then holiday means that*

¹ P = Participant

² R = Rinpoche (Lakha Lama)



it is a day off where you don't have to think of those hours, *but—still the mental day off is not there!*

Anyhow, when I look through the texts and all this [from] these great philosophers, the reason they are great philosophers is not that they have been studying at the university to get some kind of a degree and all this. It is more a mental degree, seeing deeper. Sometimes, when I read some text then at first, I use my skeptical [mind], "*ahhh, how can this be [so]?*" Then I go into my analytic way of looking into [the matter]. There I can see more and more clear—"YES!" The text can say, "*don't follow the anger.*" "*Oh yes Sir, I will not follow...*" That [approach] doesn't work. When I use my analytic way of looking, when I follow my anger—not "me anger"—my angry thoughts, do I feel very relaxed or not...? Okay! So, my feeling of being uncomfortable, what makes me feel uncomfortable...? Is it another person, or my anger...? So then..., do I need to follow my anger? Who is forcing me to do it? So, what I see is that one of the thoughts is forcing me to follow my anger. Ordinarily, we say, "*I am angry.*" If I am "the anger" then there is nothing to do, then we just continue [there is no other option]. I *have* the anger—my anger, *not me!* So, all these thoughts, anger, jealousy, blaming... all these thoughts [are something] we have. They are not our "Self" [and what we are]! By seeing that deeper truth gives us the possibility that every human being can develop and be free from destructive mental factors.

Now, practically Pia has already arranged everything, and you can enjoy—okay. It is for me to share on the mental level. And I share what I SEE. I don't share because it is written.

P: *I was thinking that it is not only in life threatening situations that one can use Buddhist methods. I think that it has often been beneficial for me to practice in less dramatical situations. I think it is beneficial because still I sometimes experience that my emotions can be so strong or powerful that they are almost impossible for me to let go off—even though I know that they are disturbing me completely... You see—then what to do...?*

R: I don't say I am totally free from emotions—yes, I have emotions. But I do not repeat that.

P: *I do!*

R: I accept at first—yes, I have these emotions—*recognize and accept that!* Then next, okay—I *will not repeat that...*

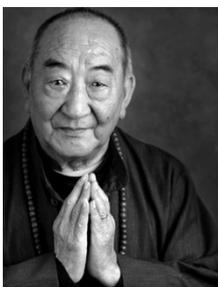
P: *That's all very good, and I might also get as far as to notice my thoughts, to accept them and to say, "okay, there you are—thank you," let go of them and then not repeat them, but then it is as if... like someone is standing outside, knocking at your door, insisting to come in—you know...? It keeps saying, "I am still here," while it is outside, knocking... And it is as if I am saying, "come on—leave me alone, I'm letting you go—can't you see that...?" Then it leaves, just to come back, knocking, knocking. The thought doesn't really become a part of me, but it keeps being present saying, "I'm still here, I'm still here..."*

R: So, it's knocking on the door...? Just say, "*I'm not here.*"

P: *But I think that one thing is to recognize the thought, but when it comes to accepting it, I think that this is really the most difficult part. I mean, one thing is seeing that you have a destructive thought, but to really accept it—and then you are almost already heading for the step [acting upon it]... Because, often I experience a lot of this and think that I accept it, but I do it again, and then I haven't really accepted it, have I...?*



- P: *Right, it's probably because I'm not accepting sincerely enough...*
- P: *Yeah, maybe! It sounds like as if, but it's a whole army standing out there, knocking...*
- P: *I have a neighbor who is knocking on my wall, as an example using his TV-set, using furniture and all other kinds of things. I know this because he does not take the pieces to the recycling depot, but leaves them out front. To begin with I wished someone would shoot him, or I had the time to consider that I had never tried dating a biker with tattoos, and maybe it was about time, so that he could have a bucket with concrete, facing the fish. And now I have come so far as to feel sorry for him, because obviously he is not well. Still I would like a new neighbor, but I have to feel sorry for him, and that is a process. I still hope that he will move.*
- P: *Otherwise, you must proceed with the biker.*
- P: *I have not come to the biker yet.*
- P: *But what does "accept" really mean...? I might say "I accept it," but what does that mean...?*
- R: *Be honest... be honest! I'm honest, "I have this feeling."*
- P: *If there are some emotions you don't want, then you feel sad, won't you—or when you don't want them you feel sad, accepting them...!?*
- R: *When you say, "you don't like and you don't want to have," that becomes more stiff. Another way of looking is "useless." Then, this is a little different way of looking at it. That is a much more relaxed way.*
- P: *Then you get past the emotion—right...?*
- R: *I have the feelings—okay! My feelings is not only a one-sided feeling. I have feelings of attachment and different feelings. I also have the feelings of compassion and care feelings. But the feeling of care can also connect to the more emotionally [level]: "I care for you, and why don't you that..!?" Then you get angry. So, you care and calm down.*



Lakha Lama, born Thupten Dorjee in Tibet in 1942, was appointed as a spiritual leader for around 100,000 inhabitants in eastern Tibet at the age of five. In 1959 he fled to India as a refugee and then came to Denmark in 1976, where he settled and started a family.

Based on basic human needs, Lakha Lama shares the Dharma and its message in a unique and simple way that makes the philosophy and methods accessible to all.

Lakha Lama's many humanistic and cross-cultural activities have attracted thousands of followers within Scandinavia and throughout the world. One Swedish follower commented: "*Lakha Lama is to Scandinavia and many Tibetans what the H. H. Dalai Lama is to the world.*"

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