

A global approach to Mind training | ལོ་ཇོང་ | Lo-Jong

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Brief Introduction:

As His Holiness Karmapa mentioned previously, the current afflictions that are world widely rampant nowadays, we have no choice but to face them and see adversity as the name of our new teacher.

It is not an easy thing to do and does call for learning and reinitialising our mind training.

In Tibetan this is called “*Lo-jong*” and this training has been transmitted and practiced very seriously and regularly over the centuries.

My point here is not to repeat what eminent teachers have already said previously.

It is however to summarise the important points that need to be understood and practiced would we want to succeed in our Dharma practice and reach its goal I.e., Buddhahood.

The Lineage of these teachings: (For a more detailed approach, see separate document)

The Lo-Jong teachings trace back to Buddha Shakyamuni. In the course of history, great masters like Nargarjuna and Asanga held and perpetuated the Mahayana teachings. In Tibet the experiential aspect of Mahayana Buddhism has been continuously upheld through the practice of pith instructions received from the masters who are living emissaries of Bodhicitta mind and have realised authentic love and compassion.

Atisha Transmitted along the essence of the mind training teachings that he received from his master, Serlingpa.

He passed the lineage to Dromtonpa who passed it to Langri Tangpa.

Nevertheless, it was Geshe Chekawa who revived the lineage of Lo-Jong.

One day he recd this profound pith instruction which shocked his mind:

**“Take all defeat upon myself.
Offer all triumph to others”.**

In search for this teaching, Chekawa went in search of Langri Tangpa. who unfortunately had just passed away. Chekawa was very sad, because he thought the lineage died, but he found a disciple named Shawara who upheld the teachings.

Chekawa stayed with Shawara for an intensive training of twelve years just to learn these two lines. Chekawa endured many hardships to receive the seven points of mind training, which represent the depth of Mahayana training.

The Preliminaries:

There are two points here, the preliminary to a period of meditation and preliminary instructions to the Mind training practice.

- The first refers to the preliminary practice to engage in any meditation session:
- **Relying on your Guru:**

- First, at the beginning of every period of meditation, imagine your root guru sitting on a lotus-and-moon seat above your head.
- His body is radiant and his face happy and smiling as he regards all beings with non-referential compassion. In him, all the root and lineage gurus are present.
- With intense respect and devotion, repeat the lineage prayer if you wish and, in particular, the following prayer a hundred or a thousand times:

*I pray for your blessing, my guru, great and completely worthy spiritual friend.
I pray that you will cause love, compassion and bodhicitta to arise in my mind.*

- Then, imagine that your guru descends through the aperture of Brahma and sits in your heart in a pavilion of light, like an open shell.
This exercise in intense respect and devotion is known as guru yoga. It is important to begin every period of meditation this way.

- The second consist in a thorough contemplation and practice of the “Lodog Nam-Zhi”.
Too often these four contemplations, although they are absolutely essential, have nevertheless been left aside, considered to be unimportant. **This leads to a mistaken path.**

I invite you therefore to reflect once again and renew your practice of the four topics:

1. “Däl-jor Nye-ka Mi-lü Rinpoche”
2. “Chiwa Mi-tagpa”
3. “Lay Draybu Nyi” and,
4. “Khor-wa’i Dug-Ngäl”.

The signs resulting of these practices when accomplished properly are that we develop naturally “Shen-Log” or the revulsion of samsara and our mind turns naturally towards Dharma practice.

As for the actual practice of Lo-Jong, the subject is identical to that of the Bodhicharyavatara; I.e., **the practice of Bodhicitta.**

Starting with relative Bodhicitta, it starts by the practice of equanimity.

To succeed in such practice of equanimity, we must start by ourselves. What do we have to do then? We must practice unconditional acceptance of the present moment.

Doing so, we will come to learn about ourselves. We will discover who we are without any form of judgement and learn progressively that so far, we most probably projected to others the mere fiction of who we want to be instead of sharing who we really are.

Only from knowing who we are with unconditional acceptance, can we discover the “ground” of our being.

That is the basis on which, we will be able to take control, a basis for improvement through genuine Dharma practice.

The training of the mind goes together with commitments.

- The first of these commitments has three points:
 - Of the three general principles, the first is not to break the promises you have made in mind training, that is, not to be tarnished by any fault or failing in any vow you have taken, including even the most minor precepts of individual liberation, Bodhisattva, or Vajrayana ordinations.

- The second principle is not to act scandalously, that is, to refrain from scandalous acts such as destroying shrines, disturbing trees and other plants, polluting streams or rivers, associating with lepers and beggars, and other ways you might behave in the hope that others will think that you have no ego-clinging. Instead, make your way of life and practice utterly pure and faultless.
- The third principle is to avoid being one-sided. For instance, although you may be patient with the trouble people cause, you may not be patient with the trouble caused by gods or demons, or vice versa. Or you may be able to handle those situations but be impatient with such sufferings as illness or disease. Maybe you can be patient in all sorts of difficult situations but let your practice of dharma lapse when you are happy and comfortable. The commitment is to avoid any bias or one-sidedness in mind training, so always practice that.
- The remaining training advocates the following points:
 - Not wasting time on the inessential.
 - Not rationalising our mistakes.
 - Change your attitude but stay natural.
 - Do not discuss defects.
 - Don't worry about other people.
 - Work on your greatest imperfection first.
 - Abandon all hope of results.
 - Give up poisonous food.
 - Don't be consistent. (Do not serve the central object leniently)
 - Don't indulge in malicious gossip. (Be indifferent towards malicious jokes)
 - Don't wait in ambush.
 - Don't strike at the heart.
 - Don't put the yak's load on the cow.
 - Remember - this is not a competition.
 - Don't be sneaky. (Do not be treacherous)
 - Don't abuse your divine power for selfish reasons.
 - Don't expect to profit from other people's misfortune.

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