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“Throughout the ages, practitioners of the Dharma have engaged in meditation and study, both of which are necessary to attain the ultimate fulfilment of enlightenment. Like all other religious paths, Buddhism aims to help us to find true peace and happiness. Many who search for real happiness cannot find it in material gain or ownership. Real, unchanging peace and happiness exist within ourselves and can only be realised through subtle intellectual inquiry and meditation. To provide the opportunity for people today, I have decided to build a place for study and meditation....”

*The Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche
1988*



Founder: The Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche (1954 –1992)

Spiritual Head: His Eminence the Fourth Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche

RDI Spiritual Advisor: The Very Venerable Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

Teachers:

Philosophy Programme: Drupon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal

Meditation Programme: Drupon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal & Khenpo Sherab **Gyaltzen**

Programme Coordinator: Khenpo Chokey Gyaltzen



**THE SECOND RIGPE DORJE 5-YEARS PROGRAMME
OF INTEGRATED STUDY & MEDITATION
YEARS 2010 TO 2014**

**BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY
Progressive Stages of the View of Emptiness**

One who has a basis in discipline along with listening and contemplation practices meditation authentically.

After having established a foundation of ethical discipline, the infallible Buddhist approach is to make practice meaningful by preceding it with listening and contemplation. This is because, in order to meditate one-pointedly, one must have the view that realises the meaning of reality, which is the meditation object. In this context, one encounters the view by listening to the authentic scriptures setting forth this topic, then contemplating their meaning, scrutinising it through flawless logic. Because view is necessary, it is said about the lack of view that:

Meditating without view

Is like a blind person wandering across a vast plain.

And also:

Meditating without listening

Is like scaling the face of a cliff without arms.

These all have the same import.

Moreover, when one studies the view as presented in the four tenet systems sequentially, the understanding of a lower step advances the comprehension of a higher one. The sequence thereby facilitates comprehension, an exceedingly important point. Consequently, this presentation progressing from coarser levels is a means for individuals who proceed in stages to easily engage the ultimate view, that of the Madhyamaka, or Middle Way school, presented in both the Rangtong and Shentong schools. The Rangtong view in turn consists of the Svatantrika and Prasangika, or Autonomy and Consequence Middle Way schools. This is an unsurpassed process of skilful means for guiding students; it is not intended to stoke quarrels through proofs and refutations.

Thus, those who wish to make their endeavours meaningful act in accordance with the sequential presentation of the teachings for how to practice the Dharma. There is no command more imperative than this mandate of the Queen of Interdependence!

In particular, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye said:

Those who long for the pleasant ring of the title of siddha or yogi, not knowing how accomplishment is attained, cast aside listening and contemplation like dog shit. Those yearning for renown as scholars spend

entire lives distracted by study, until the texts fall apart in their hands, so practice remains but a wish. Neither approach is conducive. Expand your eye of Dharma by making meditation the priority,

The Lord of Dharma, Gampopa, taught:

Undertaking the triad of listening, contemplation, and meditation collectively is an unerring essential point of Dharma.

These crucial points have a shared intent. Therefore, sustain the two in unison – neither overpowering meditation through study, nor robbing study through meditation – and they will reveal themselves as mutually reinforcing. Clearly, following this genuine tradition is the most worthwhile training.

The Lord Protector, the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche explained that his principal intention in establishing the Rigpe Dorje Institute for International Buddhist Studies was to ensure that those with faith were accurately guided in accord with the Dharma.

With all this as the basis, the **5-year sequential programme** of study is as follows:

1. YEAR 2010: *Lam gTso rNam gSum* or *The Principal Aspects of the Path* by Je Tsongkhapa that expounds on the three crucial aspects of the Path, namely renunciation, bodhicitta, and the view; based on Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye's commentary, *sKal bZang Thar Pa'i Jug Ngogs* or *The Path of Liberation for the Fortunate Ones*.

Additionally, the introduction to the tenets of the Vaibhashika, Sautantrika, and Cittamatra schools integrated with science of mind and science of reasoning. This is aimed at directing the mind toward the system of tenets of the Vaibhashika and Sautantrika as they actually are, and to facilitate an initial realisation of the basic nature through the Cittamatra tenets.

2. YEAR 2011: AUTONOMY MIDDLE WAY VIEW. *Madhyamakalamkara* or *Ornament of the Middle Way* by the Great Abbott Shantarakshita, with commentary by Mipham Rinpoche, Part One. The topic is the presentation of the Autonomy Middle Way or Svatantrika view which, when realised, opens the door to the treasury of the basic nature. As to ascertaining the presentation on apparent reality precisely, it is said:

Those who ignore the ladder of apparent reality in climbing to the highest ramparts of the palace of genuine reality are certainly fools!

3. YEAR 2012: AUTONOMY MIDDLE WAY VIEW (continued). *Madhyamakalamkara*, or *Ornament of the Middle Way*, by the Great Abbott Shantarakshita, with commentary by Mipham Rinpoche, Part Two.

4. YEAR 2013: CONSEQUENCE MIDDLE WAY VIEW. The wisdom chapter of the Bodhisattva Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*, or *Guide to Bodhisattva Conduct*, with commentary by Mipham Rinpoche. The topic is the presentation of the Consequence Middle Way or Prasangika view, which, when realised, allows one to penetrate to the very depths of the basic nature.

5. YEAR 2014: SHENTONG, EMPTY OF OTHER VIEW. *Praise of the Dharmadhatu* by the Protector Nagarjuna. The topic is the Empty of Other or Shentong view, which, when realised, is the recognition of the basic nature itself.

Consequently, if this process transpires correctly, one's mindstream will ripen, rendering it a fit vessel for engaging in any of the higher practices, such as Mahamudra, Dzogchen, and secret mantra. In any case, assuming the certainty of the nature of interdependence and karmic cause and effect, by not mistaking the fundamental root of these, as explained above, you can show yourself great kindness through a positive attitude and an honest mindset towards yourself. So by all means, do so!



**THE SECOND RIGPE DORJE 5-YEARS PROGRAMME
OF INTEGRATED STUDY & MEDITATION
YEARS 2010 TO 2014**

**MEDITATION
Progressive Stages of Meditation Practice**

As Acharya Vasubhandu said:

One who has a basis in discipline along with listening and contemplation, practices meditation authentically.

After having established a foundation of ethical discipline, the infallible Buddhist approach is to make practice meaningful by preceding it with listening and contemplation, Moreover, the King of Dharma, Gampopa, taught:

Undertaking the triad of listening, contemplation, and meditation collectively is an unerring essential point of Dharma.

Thus, one must neither overpower meditation through study, nor rob study through meditation, but sustain them in unison, without divorcing one from the other. This is an especially crucial fact. In particular, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye said:

Expand your eye of Dharma by making meditation the priority, without succumbing to partiality for listening and contemplation alone.

Thus, the sure custom of the practice lineage is to make the practice of meditation pivotal, treating listening and contemplation as its auxiliaries. While one may either pursue view through meditation, or meditation through view, of these two approaches, the first is understood to be a particularly essential point for those within the practice lineage tradition. Although there are various kinds and levels of meditation, without question, their sole purpose is to tame the mind. As to this principle, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye also said:

"Taming the mind" means taming the kleshas.

With this as its only purpose, the process is to definitively liberate the very ignorance which is the root of all kleshas, comprised of not knowing oneself, into reflexively self-aware wisdom. Absent the shamatha that rests in the state of seeing oneself precisely, however, it is not possible to establish the finely discerning prajna that perceives one's very essence. Consequently, the vipashyana that realises the basic nature also does not develop.

Thus, the general essential point is the need to accomplish shamatha and vipashyana sequentially, in order to train in them in union. As Shantideva said:

*Knowing that vipashyana fully endowed with shamatha,
Completely vanquishes the kleshas,
Pursue shamatha from the start!*

This presents the intended meaning unmistakably.

In our particular context, the root and principal factor of the Mahayana path is the bodhicitta mind. Furthermore, of the two kinds, ultimate and relative, it is said of ultimate bodhicitta:

*The very essence of emptiness is compassion,
Vivid, unwavering, and free of the extremes of conceptual elaboration.*

Thus, the very essence of the prajna that realises emptiness is compassion. Moreover, it is necessary to rely on relative bodhicitta, the drive to benefit others, in order to develop this in one's mindstream. The method for accomplishing the mind whose essential character is to cherish others more than oneself is training the mind in equalising and exchanging oneself and others. Therefore, the Bodhisattva Shantideva taught a method for accomplishing shamatha by training the mind in equalising and exchanging oneself and others. Simultaneously accomplishing both relative bodhicitta and shamatha, the cause of ultimate bodhicitta, is a skillful means for readily accomplishing ultimate bodhicitta. This unsurpassed method unique to the Mahayana is beyond cavil.

In keeping with this, the five step program for the meditation sequence is as follows:

- 1. YEAR 2010: SHAMATHA.** Training the mind in the methods of shamatha meditation through the general method for stabilising the foundation of the practice through the causes and conditions of shamatha, namely, understanding how to abandon what is to be eliminated and how to cultivate the remedies.
- 2. YEAR 2011: BODHICITTA THROUGH EQUALISING SELF AND OTHER.** The meditation on equalising self and others, guarded by the skilful means of shamatha, based on the chapter on meditative concentration of Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*, or *Guide to Bodhisattva Conduct*.
- 3. YEAR 2012: BODHICITTA THROUGH EXCHANGING SELF AND OTHER.** The meditation on exchanging self and others, guarded by the skilful means of shamatha, based on the same text and chapter as in year 2011.
- 4. YEAR 2013: VIPASHYANA.** Vipashyana meditation, applying the four establishments of mindfulness unique to the Madhyamaka, or Middle Way school, based on the chapter on wisdom of Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*, or *Guide to Bodhisattva Conduct*.
- 5. YEAR 2014: MAHAMUDRA.** Having ripened the mindstream through the preceding subjects, we will listen, contemplate, and meditate on "The Naturally Dawning Innate State," Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye's song of realisation about meditating on the Mahamudra view.

By nurturing one's own benefit through such a progression, one ripens one's mindstream and achieves liberation. Consequently, one distils the very essence of the freedoms and resources and makes one's precious human existence meaningful, thus showing oneself great kindness – so do not fall prey to self-doubt and indolence!

PLEASE NOTE: While Rigpe Dorje Institute makes every effort to conform to the established program, if necessary, texts or subjects may be replaced by an appropriate substitute without notice.