
The Condensed Graduated Path to Enlightenment

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We can meditate for a little bit as usual. Seat yourself in a comfortable and relaxed posture. There is no need for me to say much more since all of you have already become good meditators. One important point to understand is that, once sitting in a good and comfortable relaxed posture, the mind also needs to be put into a relaxed internal state. If one were just to sit physically relaxed and doesn't turn the mind inwards but lets the mind continue to engage external objects then there is not much point to meditation. The mind is still agitated and disturbed. This is a point that you would already be aware of but I thought I'd mention it anyway.

To have the opportunity to sit down and be firstly physically relaxed and then, on the top of being physically relaxed, to experience mental happiness is very fortunate. Everybody looks for the happiness that comes from physical relaxation that is also accompanied by mental happiness. If one has the opportunity to have this experience then I think that is very fortunate and significant. Even without talking about the happiness of future lives, just to be able to experience this happiness in the present life is very precious. At least that's what I feel. That is actually what we all want, to sit there and to be able to bliss out without having to go to work (laughter).

One wants to have this experience of physical as well as mental happiness; being physically relaxed and well and also having mental happiness. It is a very common experience that people work throughout their lives towards their retirement with the idea that, when retirement comes, they will have enough money not to have to work and to be able to physically relax. The idea is, of course, to also have a mental state of happiness. But it is a common experience that when this time comes, when one doesn't have to go to work and is physically more at ease, that one is not quite able to experience the mental happiness that one expected. This is an experience that happens quite often when then the time comes when one can stop work. Even though there is physical leisure, mentally it doesn't quite work out the way one hoped. The reason for this is that even though one worked all one's life to accumulate the conducive external conditions to be able to spend the later part of one's life in leisure, one didn't work on the internal conditions to be able to experience mental happiness. One only accumulated the external conditions, but one neglected the internal conditions that facilitate a happy mind. By being aware of this, one should take care, early on, not only to

accumulate the external conditions but also to look after the internal conditions so that one is also able to mentally experience happiness.

It is a common experience that, even before retirement, if one has the opportunity for physical leisure where one could actually just sit down and relax one is not able to do that. Even young people find it difficult just to sit down and be calm and relaxed. There is this urge to do something, like throwing a ball around or engaging in some other sporting activity. If it is just those activities then it wouldn't be all that bad. But if one doesn't train oneself from an early age one finds it very difficult to just physically relax. The important thing that one has to look after, that one has to do, is look after the mind and subdue the mind. By subduing the mind the body is also subdued. But the reverse does not apply. Being physically calm and still in no way guarantees that the mind will be calm and still. If the mind is calm and still then it will be no problem for the body to be calm and still. Having subdued both body and mind in this way, having control over both body and mind, one will experience happiness.

It's important, I think, for you to keep these things in mind. We can meditate for a few minutes by first sitting ourselves in the appropriate meditation posture and then stopping the mind engaging external objects and turning it inwards instead. Then, after having turned the mind completely inwards, place the mind single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath in a very vivid and clear manner. By doing this repeatedly, day after day, one's focus will become stronger and clearer. We can meditate in that way for a few minutes. (*Pause for meditation*)

I am waking you up from your meditative equipoise. It is all right, as I am waking you up from your meditative equipoise for dharma practice. If I were to wake you up from meditative equipoise for some other frivolous activity I would receive a fault. Also, if one wakes somebody from their meditative equipoise just for fun they will not be pleased.

I think it is very important, especially for younger students, that you do not neglect your studies. Sometimes younger students become so enthusiastic about the dharma that they want to be ordained. I tell them that it is better to finish school and university before becoming ordained. First finish your school and university and then become ordained, then become a monk or a nun. It is possible that even though you become ordained that it does not work out. Then, if life as an ordained person doesn't work out, one has something to fall back on. One has a university education to fall back on in the world. Otherwise, if the ordained life doesn't work out, and one has to go back to the lay life then one doesn't have anything to fall back on.

Sometimes younger students have a little bit of a dilemma when their study classes fall on Wednesday or Tuesday night. I always say, "Oh, don't worry about the dharma class. It is more important at the moment for you to concentrate on your school studies and your university

studies. The dharma will work out over time". I give this advice because it is important. I see the significance for you to develop a good education and a good basis in worldly life. We need to develop both. We need to develop the dharma side but we also need to develop the worldly side. There is a purpose there.

4. How to guide with the actual instructions

4.1. The way of relying on the spiritual friend who is the root of the path

4.1.2. A brief presentation of the way to strive

4.1.2.2. The reason one needs to strive in two ways, eliminating misconceptions regarding the way of striving

Last time we discussed the relationship between, and the necessity of, analytical meditation and single-pointed meditation. We said that there are certain practitioners who feel that actual practice is only single-pointed meditation and they don't feel that analytical meditation is an actual part of their practice. They would say that analytical meditation is an oxymoron, that there is no such thing. For them, if it is meditation then it has to be single-pointed. We refuted this last time in different ways and we said that, for example, this view is also refuted by the great bodhisattva Shantideva in his texts, *Introduction to the Middle Way* and *The Compendium of Training*.

In *The Compendium of Training* Shantideva says that one should meditate in four ways with regards to the body, possessions and merits:

give them away,

look after them,

purify them,

increase them.

This means one meditates on generosity, looking after, purifying and increasing in relation to ones body, possessions and merits.

For example, first one can meditate on giving one's body away, dedicating one's body to others. Secondly, after one has done that one needs to look after one's body, because if one has dedicated one's body to others one should not just let one's body go to waste, meaninglessly. Thirdly, one purifies ones body, which means to purify it from inherent existence. The appearance of the body as inherently existent has to be purified. Likewise, the appearances of ones possessions and merits as inherently existent have to be purified.

Fourthly, one meditates on increasing. For example, one needs to increase ones merits.

Shantideva explained this fourfold approach of meditation with regards to the body, possessions and merits of; giving them away, looking after them, purifying them and increasing them and he classified these four as meditation. Even though they are not single-pointed engagement of one single object he still classified them as meditation. He said that all these activities are meditation. One should not have a small view of meditation. Meditation is not just one tiny piece, but it is

much vaster.

One arrives at the conclusion that there are two types of meditation. There is analytical meditation where one develops discriminating awareness with regards to the object and its individual facets and aspects, and there is single-pointed engagement of the object without any type of analysis. There are these two types of meditations. Which brings one to the question, "If there are these two types of meditation when do I practice analytical meditation and when do I practice single-pointed meditation? To which parts do I have to apply analytical meditation and to which parts do I have to apply single-pointed meditation?"

Lama Tsong Khapa wrote the Lam Rim text we are studying, the Middle Lam Rim, and his *Great Exposition on the Stages of the Path* which is a more elaborate version of this. In this text he tries to deal with the different types of doubts and questions that arise and he tries to clear them up with quotations from different scriptures and with different reasoning. I think it is very useful to look at it.

One needs analytical meditation when one meditates on faith towards the spiritual friend, when one meditates on the great purpose of the precious human rebirth and the difficulty of attaining the rarity of the precious human rebirth, when one meditates on impermanence, on the law of cause and effect, karmic cause and effect, and on the shortcomings of cyclic existence and bodhicitta. For these types of meditations, one needs analytical meditation. So, to meditate on bodhicitta, for example, one needs analytical meditation. Why is analytical meditation needed to meditate on bodhicitta?

Lama Tsong Khapa gives an explanation for saying that analytical meditation is needed. In order to generate bodhicitta one needs to generate a very intense awareness, a strong awareness that abides for a long time and that deeply moves one's mental continuum; a mental state by which one is deeply moved. This type of mental state is needed for bodhicitta; a very strong mental state that abides for a long time and can deeply move one's mind. It is for that reason one needs analytical meditation. If one doesn't generate these types of mind one is not able to overcome the obstructive conditions such as disrespect and so forth which obstruct one's generation of the above mentioned topics. Without analytical meditation one is not able to overcome the obstructive conditions that would prevent one from realising the different meditations such as faith in the spiritual friend and so forth.

The opposite of faith in the spiritual friend is lack of faith. In order to overcome lack of faith in the spiritual friend one needs to repeatedly think about the qualities of the spiritual friend. One needs to repeatedly investigate, think about, contemplate, the different qualities of the spiritual friend. This is analytical meditation and in this way one is able to overcome the faithless attitude. Without analytical meditation one will not be able to overcome the inner mental obstruction that would prevent one from generating a positive attitude towards

one's spiritual friend. The same principle applies to all the other meditation topics. Generating a realisation of the abovementioned topics is totally dependent on repeatedly performing analytical meditation.

Lama Tsong Khapa gives an example to illustrate the power of repeated analysis; the power of analytical meditation. If one meditates repeatedly on imputing beautiful characteristics on the object of attachment one will generate very intense desire for that object. Repeatedly going in one's mind again and again over the different attractive qualities that one perceives in the object acts as a condition for very intense desire to be generated for that object. Likewise, by repeatedly going over the negative aspects of an object again and again in one's mind, looking at the different faults of the object from different angles generates very intense anger for that object.

This illustrates very clearly the power of repeated contemplation of the different characteristics of an object. It illustrates the power of analysis. Similarly, by repeatedly contemplating the qualities of the spiritual friend, one generates very strong faith in the spiritual friend. By bringing to mind the different qualities of the spiritual friend and individually going over the qualities of the spiritual friend again and again in one's mind we generate very strong faith in the spiritual friend. Likewise, by bringing to mind the different qualities of the precious human rebirth and the reasons that the precious human rebirth has a great purpose and is very rare will generate a strong feeling for the preciousness of the precious human rebirth and its great purpose and so forth. This comes about through the force of the repeated analysis of the object.

One should not be discouraged if the object does not appear very clearly to the mind. Regardless of whether the object appears clearly to the mind or not, one should engage in repeated analytical meditation for a long time because one needs to generate a very strong awareness that can move one's mind.

This is significant because even though one does not meditate single-pointedly on one object when one performs analytical meditation one still needs to meditate single-pointedly. One specific characteristic of the single-pointed engagement of the object, the specific meditation that is referred to as single-pointed meditation, is that one meditates only on one single object. The exact distinctions between analytical meditation and single-pointed engaging meditation will be elaborated later. What you need to know now is that the meaning of meditation is to focus on the object single-pointedly. To focus on a virtuous object single-pointedly and to acquaint and familiarise the mind with that virtuous object is the meaning of meditation. This can be done both in an analytical manner as well as in a completely single-pointed manner with only one single object. Here we talk about it from the point of view of doing this in an analytical manner. When one, for example, meditates on compassion repeatedly thinking about the object of one's compassion will increase one's compassion. We can elaborate on this later. This will be explained in even

more detail later in the chapter on calm abiding. We can't be sure. Maybe before we reach the chapter on calm abiding you might have already attained calm abiding. That's also possible. Do you have a question?

Question: If one is in the early stages of coming to terms with bodhicitta and is thinking of issues like a mother's love and then trying to recognise that all sentient beings are related to us in previous rebirths, is that analytical meditation or is it single-pointed?

That is analytical meditation. We just said that bodhicitta is achieved with analytical meditation. If you think about it one is not able to achieve these different realisations with single-pointed concentration alone. These different realisations need to be generated through wisdom, through understanding these different situations such as that one had a relationship with others in the past, that others were one's mother in the past, and so forth. These types of realisation don't come about through mere single-pointed abiding of the mind. Single-pointed abiding of the mind on one particular object can make the body and mind flexible and serviceable so that they become better vehicles for analytical meditation. But one still needs to engage in analytical meditation, investigating these different situations and topics, in order to generate an understanding of them. That was a very good question, thank you.

We can leave it here for tonight. As we said at the beginning, turn the mind inwards and place it single-pointedly on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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