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## The Condensed Lam Rim

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We can meditate a little bit as usual. Seat yourself in a comfortable and relaxed posture. Then it is important to generate a good motivation. It is good to generate a motivation of love and compassion because any action that one engages in on the basis of love and compassion will be a worthwhile and beneficial action. If one engages in an action on the basis of an unhealthy motivation it makes one unhappy, but if one engages in actions with a pure motivation it makes also one feel good.

If one investigates the nature of sentient beings one finds that they are all the same. They all don't want to have the slightest of sufferings and want to have the best possible happiness, exactly as oneself. Reflecting upon how sentient beings are really not different from oneself should make one value them more.

It is very important to generate love and compassion because generating love and compassion acts as a protection within one's own mind. Generally everybody has a good nature but then, involuntarily through small conditions, negative attitudes arise without control, which then obscure one's good nature. In order to protect one's mind from these disturbing attitudes one can meditate on love and compassion, which will have the effect of building oneself up internally and protecting oneself from harmful attitudes.

In order to have success in one's meditation one needs to lessen the adverse conditions that prevent positive mental states arising in one's mind. When we say we meditate we mean that we habituate the mind with virtuous states. We familiarise it with virtuous states and train the mind on virtuous objects in order to increase the positive states of mind, the wholesome states of the mind. That will only be successful if one is actually able to lessen the states of the mind that prevent pure mental states arising.

It is a common experience that many different mental states arise that can disturb the mind. During the course of one day many different mental states arise in one's mind. Many different things appear without control to one's mind that have the effect of disturbing the mind. To stop these disturbing mental images one initially turns the mind inwards and places it in a state of no-thought that stops these appearances to the mind. Then, after having placed the mind in this empty internal state of no-thought, when one has stopped engaging external objects, one places the mind on the coming and going of the breath. It will remain on the coming and going of the breath, at least initially, then it is dependent on how well one is acquainted with the meditation. We can meditate in that way for a few minutes. *Pause for meditation.*

I think it would be a good idea for you to practise this meditation regularly on a daily basis, and then over time through one's practice the mind will become calmed in a state of equipoise. This will have a positive effect on the elements that make up one's physical body because the disturbed mind will disturb the balance of the elements in one's body. It will disturb the particles that make up the elements in one's body and bring them into imbalance. Calming the mind also has a balancing effect on the physical elements. It is good to keep in mind that meditation has a balancing effect on the physical body, on the elements. One experiences physical discomfort when the elements are in a state of imbalance and disarray. Meditating not only calms the mind it also balances the physical elements. You should practise this meditation regularly with this benefit in mind.

### 4.2.1 Exhorting the disciple to take the essence of this basis with endowments

#### 4.2.1.3 Reflecting on the difficulty of obtaining them

We went through the different ways one can reflect on the rarity of the precious human rebirth from the point of view of the cause and from the point of view of the result. Now we can do it from the point of view of its characteristics.

To attain a mere higher rebirth one needs to practise morality, and to attain a precious human rebirth one needs to practise very pure morality. Without the practice of morality, such a rebirth is impossible, but to practise pure morality and that is really very difficult. That then needs to be complemented with the practise of the six perfections and pure prayer, all of which is very difficult. Therefore one should not think, '*Oh, my present situation came from my father and the mother*'. One should contemplate that in one's previous life one engaged in a diversity of very difficult practices through which one achieved the present result of a human body. But this is not just a human body but a human body that has enough wealth to have a comfortable life and various other attributes. To have a human body alone is not enough. One also wants, for example, to have a good complexion and so forth. There are many things that contribute to a happy human life and all of these come about through causes that one created in the past.

One needs to practise morality in order to attain a mere human existence. To have enough wealth for a comfortable life one needs to practice generosity. This also needs to be complemented by pure prayer. Pure prayer is a prayer that is not directed towards the happiness of this life, which is also very difficult to do. One is very easily drawn to making prayers for the happiness of this life such as for a long life free from sickness. It is very difficult to make pure prayers that are not concerned with the happiness of this life. One should endeavour to practise, as much as possible, creating the causes for a future precious human rebirth through the practice of morality, generosity, pure prayer and so forth.

It's good to think that while precious human rebirth is very rare for sentient beings as a whole, it is not rare for oneself because at the moment one has a precious human

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rebirth.

That's how one can reflect upon how the precious human rebirth is difficult to attain from the point of *view of the cause*. It is also difficult to attain from the point of *view of the result*. One can look around oneself and see there are uncountable non-human existences where one can take rebirth. Then, even among humans, to find somebody who is endowed with the eight freedoms and ten endowments is very rare. From the point of view of the result, a precious human rebirth is also very rare.

In order to appreciate the rarity of the precious human rebirth one just needs to look at all the possibilities for rebirth in the animal realm. There are many more possibilities for rebirth in the animal realm than in the human realm. When animals give birth they usually give birth to many more offspring than a human. There are many animals that give birth to five or six offspring. Amongst humans, though it does happen, it is actually quite rare. There are many types of animals that give birth to many more offspring. If you look at fish, for example, one mother gives birth to thousands of new fish, or tens of thousands of new fish. Considering all these possibilities for rebirth will make one appreciate one's human rebirth much more.

#### 4.2.2 The way in which one takes the essence

##### 4.2.2.1 The general presentation of the path

###### 4.2.2.1.1 Training of the mind in the stages of the being of small capability

What one has to initially consider is that anything that the Buddha taught was taught for the benefit of sentient beings, which can be summed up in *higher status* and *definite goodness*. Initially the Buddha generated great compassion and bodhicitta and that was for the welfare of sentient beings. Then, in the middle, he practised the path by practising the six perfections and building up the two accumulations in a very extensive manner, which was also for the benefit of sentient beings. Then he finally attained complete enlightenment and that was also for the benefit of sentient beings. Then the Buddha, as an enlightened being, taught the Dharma which was also entirely for the benefit of sentient beings, and the purpose of sentient beings is twofold: temporary and ultimate. The temporary purpose is higher status and the ultimate purpose is definite goodness. The purpose of higher status falls within the aim of the being a practitioner of small capacity. The aim of definite goodness falls within the aims of the practitioners of greater capability.

We can have questions, if you have questions.

*Question.*

The definition of morality is a mind of restraint. Saying *'I'm not going to harm anybody'* is a thought of restraint. The very first action to avoid is killing. Then there are other actions to avoid such as a stealing, sexual misconduct and so forth. But the initial action to avoid is killing. An example of morality would be the mind thinking, *'I'm not going to harm anybody'*. That is a mind of restraint, restraining oneself from harming others. It is very useful to have this motivation at the beginning of

the day. If one generates this motivation at the beginning of the day, *'Today I'm not going to kill any sentient being'*, it is very useful and very beneficial.

You can see how morality, the mind of restraint, the mind that thinks *'I'm not going to harm any sentient being'*, is the root of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha's teachings are rooted in non-harmfulness. This comes in greater detail in the chapter on the law of cause and effect. At the present time we are just explaining the general outline of the path.

It is good to contemplate how the purpose of sentient beings can be summed up in the temporary and ultimate purpose. Higher status is the temporary purpose and definite goodness is the ultimate purpose. The teachings of the Buddha are to assist sentient beings achieve these two purposes. And why? Because the Buddha initially generated bodhicitta for the benefit of sentient beings, then practised the six perfections for the benefit of sentient beings, then built up the two accumulations for sentient beings, then attained enlightenment for sentient beings and then taught the Dharma for the benefit of sentient beings. The benefits of sentient beings are these two purposes.

*Question: How does one generate love?*

Love is a mind that wishes the other person to have happiness and compassion is the mind that wishes the other person to be free from suffering. What one has to do is reflect upon how the other person is lacking happiness on the one hand and is experiencing suffering on the other hand. Reflecting upon how the other person is lacking the happiness that they desire generates love for the person and awareness of the other person's suffering generates compassion for them. One can relate this to oneself by observing one's own situation and how one lacks the happiness that one desires and is experiencing suffering that one does not desire and how that feels. By understanding one's own situation one can transfer that understanding to others and in this way understand how it feels for them. That then generates love and compassion for them.

When one observes the suffering of a person to whom one is close, that they are sick, for example, that naturally generates the thought wanting them to be free from sickness. One naturally generates compassion for that person. If one observes that they are lacking happiness one naturally wishes for them to have the happiness that they desire, which is the mind of love. Reflecting upon the situation of other sentient beings generates love and compassion.

*Question: Does the success of this life come from actions in a past life?*

Yes, that would be because because of positive actions in past lives. It depends, of course, on the individual situation. There can be also contributing actions in this life. However the main cause is really the actions one engaged in during past lives. It becomes more obvious if one looks at a person that seems to be just naturally very fortunate without really having done very much in this life. They enjoy a very fortunate life. Where are causes for

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their fortunate life that they enjoy? It comes from the past. The causes were created in the past.

One also finds the situation where people who, when they were born into this life were of little merit but through their own efforts in this life, create the causes in this life and build up their merit and improve their life. Later they are able to say, '*Oh in the earlier part of my life I worked very hard and encountered many difficulties, but now, in the later part of my life, it is very smooth going and I can enjoy the fruits of my difficulties*'.

*Question: What is a sentient being?*

A sentient being is something that is endowed with consciousness; that is endowed with mind. Some people say that flowers possess mind. I don't know about this. In ancient India there were certain philosophical schools that asserted that different types of flowers and plants had consciousness because they would open in the morning and close during the night (*laughter*). There are also certain plants that curl up their leaves when they are touched.

*Question: Could you explain the dynamics of untimely death?*

Untimely death means that you die before your time. If the original life span of that person may have been 100 years, but then, through some other conditions, that person dies earlier that would be an untimely death. For example, children dying in car accidents and so forth. Of course it's difficult to say. It might actually have been that the time of death of the person actually came at the time of the accident, but accidents can be a cause of untimely death.

*Question: What causes can I create to again meet with my teachers in future lives?*

You have to do what we say (*laughter*). It's also not just a question of one or two lives, but of many, many lifetimes. It's possible that we have had karmic relations over many, many lifetimes. Sometimes I was the student and you were the teacher. It's good to pray that one meets one's teachers again, not just in the next life, but also over many, many lifetimes. There's a prayer where one prays, '*In all my lifetimes may I never be separated from my holy gurus and from the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, complete all the stages of the path and attain the state of Vajradhara*'. It's good to do these prayers and if one has merit these prayers would be accomplished. One can pray for all sentient beings to become enlightened, to never be separated from one's teacher in all one's future lives, to always meet a Mahayana teacher in one's future lives, for the Buddhadharma to abide for ever and for one's teacher's to live for along time. If you make these prayers and accumulate merit you don't need to worry that you might be separated from your teachers in a future life.

As was explained at the beginning, bring the mind back home and focus it on the mantra.

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TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA