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# The Condensed Lam Rim

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We can meditate for a little bit as usual. Seat yourself comfortably in a good posture. It is important to meditate in order to subdue the mind. By subduing the mind one can attain a special type of happiness, which is a happiness over which one has control. Within one's life there are many different types of happiness. The different types of happiness that arise from the external conditions that one experiences are not reliable and quite often they tend to disturb the mind more than give actual happiness. By freeing the mind from disturbing thoughts and generating virtuous mental states one can attain a type of happiness over which one has power.

If the mind is under the control of disturbing thoughts it can have that effect that one continuously experiences some kind of unhappiness and disturbance, regardless of what one is doing. But when one tries to pinpoint the cause of this unhappiness, it is little bit difficult to do so. This type of unhappiness in the mind, and the disturbing thoughts that cause this unhappiness, have the effect of disturbing the mind and making the mind depressed. If one does not get a grip on it, then it tends to disturb the mind more and more.

Instead of always looking towards the outside for the causes of one's unhappiness one should look inside. By observing the mind one might be quite surprised by the strange ways in which the mind works and the different, strange types of thoughts and mental states that arise in the mind. In a way it can be quite amusing to look at one's own mind and recognise these. That one tends to generate these different types of disturbing thoughts, many of them often quite irrational, is a manifestation of the karmic imprints on one's mind, as these different mental states arise from karmic imprints on one's mind. To control these disturbances it is important that one learns to fasten the mind to one meditational object and train the mind in single-pointed meditation. This can overcome the disturbance and restore balance and happiness in one's mind.

It is very important that one looks after one's mind well with meditation in order to be able to generate proper happiness. There are many people who are materially very well off, even rich, but they say that despite their wealth their mind is very unhappy. Despite having wealth they experience internal disturbances, internal unhappiness, and experience a feeling of inner emptiness. This is not surprising because these are often people that don't know about the mind and the way the mind works and are only focused on external objects. But oneself, who is not in that situation, who is aware of the mind and the importance of the mind, should make use of that

knowledge and apply the methods to one's mind. In that way one should improve one's mind, purify the mind over time from disturbing and unsuitable mental states and generate more and more positive and wholesome mental states. By doing this over a long time, then slowly, slowly the mind improves more and more.

Once sitting in a good meditation posture focus the mind internally and, after having focused the mind internally, place it single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. This placement of the mind on the coming and going of the breath should happen in a very gentle manner, by just thinking of the breath. We can meditate in that manner for a few minutes. *Pause for meditation.*

It is important that one meditates on a daily basis in the manner we explain regularly. One can, of course, only meditate relative to how much time one has in a day. Sometimes one is very busy with work and different things, but it is important that one practises mindfulness throughout one's day. For example being mindful of the actions of one's speech, and to take a short mental pause before saying something and reflect upon whether what one is going to say is going to be harmful or whether it is going to be beneficial. By reflecting in this way one can avoid much unpleasantness in one's workplace. Quite often the frictions that are generated in one's workplace come about because of unpleasant things that were said carelessly without thinking or because one frowned at another person, and so forth. By practising mindfulness and taking the time to reflect upon what one is going to say and then, if one finds that one was going to say something harmful, changing one's mental attitude and saying something that is friendly and beneficial, making the other person happy and smiling at the other person, one can avoid lots of friction in the workplace.

One should base one's actions on compassion and love and concern for the welfare of others. This is something that one should do in all one's actions, regardless of whether one is walking, lying down, sitting, talking, etc.

## 4.2.2.1.2 The actual way to take the essence

### 4.2.2.1.2.1. Training the mind in the stages of the path of the small capable being

#### 4.2.2.1.2.1.1. The actual way of training in the motivation common to the being of small capacity

##### 4.2.2.1.2.1.1.1. Generating the aspiration for the happiness in the future life

###### 4.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.1. Remembering death, becoming aware that one is not going to remain for a long time

###### 4.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.1.1. First one contemplates the faults of not meditating on remembering death

Now we come to the next outline that is the actual way of taking the essence of this precious human body. This outline, the actual way of taking the essence of this life, has three chapters:

- Training the mind in the stages of the path of the small capable being;
  - Training the mind in the stages of the path of the medium capable being; and
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- Training the mind in the stages of the path of the great capable being.

The first chapter, training the mind in the stages of the path common to the small capable being, has three outlines:

- The actual way of training in the motivation common to the being of small capacity; then
- The measure of having generated that motivation; and then
- Clarifying misunderstandings with regards to these points.

The first outline, the actual training in the motivation common to the being of small capacity, has two points:

- Generating the aspiration for the happiness in the future life; and then
- Showing the method for achieving their happiness in their future life.

Here again the first point, generating the aspiration for happiness in the future life, has two headings:

- Remembering death, becoming aware that one is not going to remain in this life for a long time; and
- To become aware that after death, one can only experience happiness or suffering.

The first point, remembering death, has four steps that one meditates upon:

- First one contemplates the disadvantages or the faults of not meditating on remembering death; and then
- Contemplating the benefits of meditating on and remembering death; and then
- The actual mind of death that is generated; and then
- The way of meditating on remembering death.

If one does not meditate on remembering death, then, even though there will be an intellectual acceptance that one has to die sooner or later, one will actually feel that one is not going to die today. While there is a general acceptance that one will die at some stage the actual feeling in the mind is that one is not going to die today. This feeling that one is not going to die today will persist throughout one's whole life. Even if one is just about to die there will still be the feeling, "I will probably die soon, but not today". Recognising that one is going die would be an understanding of coarse impermanence. Understanding that one changes from day to day is an understanding of coarse impermanence.

If one were to remain under the control of the belief that one is not going to die, the very strong belief in one's permanence, certain problems arise. If no problems were to arise there is no issue. One can just leave the mind in that state. Here we are looking at what happens if one leaves the mind under the control of the grasping at one's permanence, and does not apply the antidote. If one does not place the mind within the antidote certain faults arise.

If one leaves one's mind under the control of the belief in one's permanence and durability one's mind will not be interested in Dharma practice. As long as one is secure in the belief in one's permanence the mind will only be interested in the happiness of this life. As long as one

strongly believes in one's permanence there will be all kinds of objects of this life that one desires. One comes up with new things that one could want and that one desires and, in this way, the mind becomes completely preoccupied with the objects of this life and with the happiness of this life. This does not leave any space within the mind to generate concern for the happiness of future lives or to generate thoughts about attaining liberation and enlightenment. This is one disadvantage of not remembering death. It leaves the mind completely under the control of the grasping at permanence and belief in one's permanence and this leaves the mind completely under the control of grasping at the happiness of this life. This in turn blocks any type of dharmic thought and type of dharmic concern for the happiness of future lives, liberation and enlightenment.

While one cannot do anything about one's death, while it is inevitable that one dies, one can do something about the mental state in which one dies. By practising the Dharma one can learn to die without fear and even to die joyfully and happy. Learning to focus the mind internally on a virtuous object also prepares one for the time of death. Now one trains one's mind in letting go of external objects and focusing the mind internally on a virtuous object. To be able to do that will be very beneficial at the time of death. It will greatly facilitate being able to die in a happy mental state. This should also be kept in mind as another benefit of one's practice. You can see that the topic of death is nothing that one has to fear.

We can stop here for tonight and go further into the topic next time. Do you have some questions?

*Question: I was wondering if you've got any daily meditation of death.*

The way of meditating on death and impermanence will come as one of the next points. It is done by what is called the three roots and nine reasons.

*Question: Is this meditation appropriate for young people?*

No, as a generality, it is not too early. It depends on the individual. If the individual has good imprints, if they have good karma, it will not disturb their mind. If they have the wrong imprints it might disturb their mind and generate wrong ideas. Even as a young person one might not be able to be completely sure of one's lifespan. An acquaintance told me of a 4-year old child who asked about death and when told, "After death, you are going to come back", found that very reassuring.

*Question: Wouldn't it be enough to just have an acceptance of death and then practice some other virtues, and not meditate on death all the time?*

The awareness of death and the need for virtue will arise only by meditating on death and impermanence. When meditating on death and impermanence one generates a definite awareness that one is going to die and one also generates an awareness of the need for virtue for the next life. That comes about through the meditation on death and impermanence. We are just at the beginning of the chapter. You probably think that death and impermanence is something that one just meditates on at

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the beginning of one's practice. It is explained a little further on in the text that death and impermanence is something that one meditates on at the beginning of one's path, in the middle of one's path and at the end of one's path for different reasons. If one meditates on it in the middle of the path it is to be able to continue on the path and at the end of the path it is to be able to completely finish the path. But there's more about that later on.

If one does not strongly remember death and impermanence, then even though one generates the motivation to practise the Dharma one might still have the idea, "Oh, I can still practise it some time later in life". There are different stages. One may generate an insight, "Oh, I need to practise the Dharma" but one can still have a procrastinating mind thinking, "Oh, it is important, but I still will do it a little bit later, not quite right now".

In the most extreme cases one does not remember the Dharma at all and one does not have any consideration for the Dharma. The next case is that even though one thinks it is important to practise the Dharma, one does not do so. Then if one starts to practise the Dharma one does not do so in a pure fashion and so forth.

*Question: How does karma manifest itself?*

The result of virtue, of good karma, is happiness and the result of black karma is suffering. With regard to future life the result of good karma would be rebirth as a human being or as a divine being.

Siblings can be vastly different despite having the same parents. First of all they can be male or female. But even if they are brothers they can have completely different types of body and mind and their experiences are completely different. One is healthy while the other is sick and so forth. These variations come about because of the karma of the individual.

Through the practice of morality, one attains a higher rebirth such as a human rebirth. Through the practice of generosity one attains wealth. Just to be human does not ensure that one has a happy life. One needs to also have enough money. But having money is not enough. One needs to also have somebody with whom one can spend the money, nice circle of friends, which is achieved through patience.

One explains to a child, "If you want to have a happy life in the future you need to stop killing. If one stops killing it is definite that one will have a higher rebirth in the next life". One can also explain to a child, "If you want to be wealthy you need to be generous and stop stealing. Being generous creates the cause to receive wealth oneself in the future. If you want to be handsome, beautiful and pretty in the next life you should stop getting angry and practise patience". Explaining it to the child in this way can generate some understanding.

As was explained at the beginning, bring the mind back home and recite the name mantra of the Buddha.

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*Edited Version*

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