
The Condensed Lam Rim

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We can meditate for a little bit as usual. Seat yourself comfortably in a good posture. To familiarise and acquaint one's mind with an internal state where the mind is not engaging external objects and following the mental afflictions is called meditation. To leave the mind in an internal state that is free from disturbing thoughts gives the mind respite; an opportunity to rest from the crazy, disturbed mind.

Ordinarily the mind is quite crazy. One can recognise this if one were to say everything that comes into one's mind. If one were to express verbally every thought that occurs in one's mind others would classify one as crazy. That's why one normally keeps many of one's thoughts to oneself. Showing that the mind can be very disturbed highlights the significance of giving the mind an opportunity where it can have respite from the mental afflictions.

If the mind is in such a state it is a sign that one has not looked after one's mind and it becomes important that one starts to look after one's mind; that one investigates one's mind with mindfulness and introspection. If, with introspection, one recognises that the mind has fallen under the control of mental afflictions one needs to recall it from these disturbing thoughts and put it back into a virtuous state. Mindfulness keeps the mind in the virtuous state.

By pacifying disturbing thoughts the mind becomes clearer and more stable. One's mindfulness and wisdom also increases because disturbing thoughts are less. Because one increases one's wisdom the mind becomes clearer and more stable. One has to recall the mind internally, focusing it totally internally, and this is done regardless of whether one engages in single pointed meditation or whether one engages in analytical meditation. One has to focus the mind internally. It is completely recalled from any type of external object and placed totally in an internal state. Then it is placed single pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. We can meditate in that way for a few minutes. (*Pause for meditation*)

It is important that you repeatedly make time for meditation. To say that you don't have time to meditate is not a very wise course of action. Normally, when the issue is whether one should go somewhere entertaining and have fun, it is very rare that one says one does not have time or that one feels too tired. Even if one has been working all day one still very easily finds the energy in the evening to go to a movie or to do other activities that waste one's time and money. Actually one easily finds time for activities that waste one's time. But when it is the

question of practising meditation one is very easily too tired or too busy and has many other more important things to do. This is not very skilful. Once one perceives an action as giving some kind of happiness one is usually very eager. One should think very carefully about this.

To meditate daily is important. One makes time in one's life for the things that are important. One will not say, "Oh I don't have time to go to work". Why? Because one needs money to live. It is basically indispensable that one goes to work. Similarly, in order to attain happiness one needs to transform one's mind. One needs to work with one's mind. The tool through which one does this is meditation. It becomes indispensable to meditate. One should consider this very carefully and make time for meditation. There is always the complaint that one is unhappy despite having good external conditions. So what is the missing thing? What is missing in one's life? Where is one's effort lacking? This is something that one should consider very carefully.

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 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

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.1.1.4 The way of meditating on remembering death

We have reached the fourth outline in the chapter on death and impermanence. This is the actual meditation on death and impermanence. The meditation on death and impermanence is done from the point of view of one's consciousness going to a future life. The point of meditating on death and impermanence is to make one aware that one has to go on to a future life and to raise the awareness that the actions of this life are the cause for the future life. It is very important to understand this view. The purpose of meditation on death and impermanence is to raise one's awareness that one has to go to a future life and that one's actions of this life will determine the future life that one will have. Therefore one should recognise the importance of being a good person in this life and of having compassion, empathy, love, generating wisdom, looking after others and so forth. The significance of all of these increases when one recognizes their impact on one's future life.

The way of actually meditating on death and the impermanence is done by way of the three roots, the nine reasons and the three decisions. Each root is established by three reasons and following each sequence of three reasons there is a decision that one makes.

One has to die and when one dies one does not go empty-handed into the next life. One takes one's karmas to the next life and these karmas determine the experience that one will have in the next life. One's virtuous karmas create future happiness while one's non-virtuous karmas

create future suffering. They are the sole thing that one can take with one to the next life. When one contemplates death and impermanence one should not contemplate it from the point of view that everything is going to end when one dies. One should contemplate it from the point of view that it is actually the start of a new beginning that will be determined by one's actions in this life.

The three roots are that death is definite, that the time of death is indefinite and that at the time of death one's body, possessions or friends are of no use. In brief, the three reasons for the first root are that there is nothing that one can do to reverse death, that one can not add to one's lifetime that is running out continuously, and that at the time of death there is no extra time to practice the dharma.

One is definitely going to die regardless of the body that one takes, the place where one lives, regardless of the time in which one lives. In the past everybody had to die and in the future everybody will have to die. Regardless of their status one definitely has to die. Because of their kindness the Buddhas and different hearers and solitary realisers manifested going into parinirvana. Even though they don't have the same experience of death as an ordinary individual they manifest passing away in order to make a point about death and impermanence. Therefore one can say that since even the Buddhas, solitary realisers and hearer arhats pass away there is absolutely no doubt about one self. One will have to die sooner or later. There is nobody that one can pinpoint who has not died. Many people have lived in the past but there is nobody that one can pinpoint who is an example of somebody who has not died.

One has to die regardless of the body that one takes, and one will have to die regardless of the place where one lives. Whether one is on the earth or whether one is somewhere in space, or anywhere else, there is no place that one can go where one will not have to die. It also does not depend on when one is born. There is no rule that people who were born during earlier times had to die but in these modern times it is different and people don't die. It is not like that. Regardless of when one is born one definitely has to die. It does not depend on the period in which one lives. It is inevitable that one has to die.

One can use the example of being encircled by four mountains. If there is a mountain in each direction one has nowhere to go. That's how it is; there is nowhere to go. When one is encircled by four high mountains one has nowhere to go and one is imprisoned in a mountain fortress. There is nothing that can make it possible to escape. There is no specific medicine, there is no specific food, and there are no specific mantras through which one can escape from this mountain prison.

This mountain prison is an analogy for the four fears. The four fears that imprison one are ageing, sickness, death and destitution. Ageing is something that occurs naturally. It is not something that takes a rest from time to time. It is not as if one ages for a certain time, then doesn't age for a certain time, then again ages for a

certain time. There is a continual inevitable process happening to one.

There is nothing that one can do or say to stop the process of ageing. It will not work if one says, "Oh, I am young and I want to remain young". It is not going to work. Regardless of what kind of means one tries to employ, whether one uses different medicines, mantras and so forth nothing is going to work. Sickness is also inevitable in life and it is another thing that one cannot stop. There is no cure against becoming sick. Likewise degeneration and decay. Destitution and decay are inevitable. The degeneration of the good things in one's life is inevitable.

The final conclusion of all of this is death, which is also inevitable. There is nothing that can stop death or the other fears. There is no medicine that one can take, there are no pills that one can take, there are no mantras that one can recite, there is no place outside or inside that one can go to to escape death and so forth.

We can stop here. The next point is that one cannot add anything to one's life. As one of the Karmapas said, what is needed is that in the present one has a fear of death and at the time of death one is fearless. But what usually happens is that one is unafraid at the present and one beats one's chest in despair when the time of death comes. It is saying that one needs to make preparations for death now, in the present. As we said before, there is nothing we can do about dying but one can do something about the way in which one dies. One needs to prepare now.

We can stop here and we won't have questions. Today I am having a holiday from questions. As we said earlier, focus the mind internally and place it single pointedly on the name mantra of Shakyamuni Buddha.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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