
The Condensed Lam Rim

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We can meditate for a bit as usual. Sit comfortably in a good posture, without fidgeting, rocking back and forth, or leaning to either side. If you move around physically, it disturbs the mind. But when I say you should sit in a relaxed manner, I don't mean that you should let your body just sit there slouching, without vitality. The body should be upright. It's good to think about the conditions conducive to one's meditation from the physical point of view

We all direct our attention and our activities to attaining mental and physical happiness. If our mental and physical actions produced that desired happiness, we could say these actions were an infallible method for attaining happiness. But, despite our consistent efforts to attain happiness and despite the occasional happiness we experience, there are also periods when we feel despondent, sad and depressed.

Of course, we will not always be immediately successful in our endeavours to attain happiness. Certain aims require a certain amount of determination and work to attain. We should not despair but keep in mind that it might take more effort than we imagined, and that ultimately we will be successful if we continue with our practice.

To be successful in our endeavours to attain happiness, we need to focus the mind internally; this is one condition for attaining happiness. The reason why we sometimes feel despondent or depressed and think that we are not getting anywhere is that our expectations are too high. We want to attain too much in too short a time, and this sometimes makes us despondent when we then realise that it's not going to happen that way.

But the main cause of our lack of success in our practice is the unsubdued mind. The unsubdued mind is the source of all our problems and we should make the determination that the afflictions in the mind definitely need to be subdued. If our meditation is based on a good understanding of the path, a good understanding of the way to meditate, and how meditation facilitates the attainment of happiness, our practice of meditation will be more fruitful.

To subdue the disturbed mind we need to focus the mind single-pointedly on an object of meditation, and through this we will attain a mental state without mental wandering. If the mind is under the control of mental wandering, regardless of what activity we engage in, we will not be able to do it successfully, whether it is meditation, working at the office, or writing a letter. If the

mind is distracted the quality of our activity will not be the same as when the mind is focused on the object.

For example, when we write a letter, there is a big difference between writing the letter hastily and in a distracted manner and writing the letter with a calm and collected mind. If we write the letter hastily and distractedly, then we will make many spelling and grammatical errors. The benefit of an undisturbed mind is universally applicable. One may have some doubt about the benefit of meditation in one's work situation. However, one benefit is that if you are a good meditator, your mind will be also calm and happy at your workplace, and you will be able to go about your activities in a focused and relaxed way, without the mind being disturbed all the time by different objects.

So, regardless of whether it is single-pointed meditation or whether it is analytical meditation, the mind will always single-pointedly engage its object. However, in single-pointed meditation, we do not think about the object, whereas in analytical meditation, we analyse the object and think about it. But even in analytical meditation, the mind should not wander here and there, but remain focused on the meditation object. Therefore, those who assert that analytical meditation is not meditation are mistaken.

Now we will focus the mind single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath, after first turning the mind inwards, bringing it home from the different external objects and wholly collecting it inside. Then we place the mind single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. This placement should not be partial or half-hearted but the mind should be completely focused on the object of meditation. We can meditate in this manner for a few minutes. (*Pause for meditation*)

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

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2 Relying on the methods for achieving happiness in future lives

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1 Training on going for refuge

Last time we started to talk about going for refuge by remembering the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The qualities of the Buddha can be categorised into the qualities of the Buddha's body, speech, mind and enlightened activities.

The marks and signs of the Buddha adorn the Buddha in the same way as the stars adorn the night sky in a clear and brilliant night. The signs beautify the Buddha's body as an enlightened being, and the 32 marks show the different qualities of the Buddha.

The Buddha's body is golden in colour, and he wears the three saffron robes of a fully ordained monk. This gives the Buddha a luminous complexion, a very pure light, similar to the pure light one sees at dawn, during sunrise, or at sunset.

Although the Buddha does not wear any ornaments, his face is luminous and glowing like a full moon. His lips are well formed and very beautiful: the analogy used is like a lotus flower. Apart from his golden complexion, the Buddha has 40 brilliant white teeth, like the white of a full autumn moon.

His palms are adorned with a long life wheel, the right hand lying over the knee, touching the ground, signifying his victory over the lower realms. The soles of his feet are also marked by Dharma wheels, and wherever he walks, the impressions he leaves behind in the ground are carved more beautifully than the work of any artist.

The quality of the Buddha's body is appreciated by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. There are many non-Buddhists who like to have a Buddha statue in their home simply because they feel it gives off some peaceful energy, or it brings some peace and calm into the room.

Even among ordinary beings, we can observe that certain people, through their karma, possess a certain perfection of body. Some people have an attractive, beautiful body. Sometimes, it also happens that there are certain flaws. They may have a nice face, but then there's something wrong with their ears or their nose; or they have nice eyes but there is something wrong with their hair. But generally, one can observe that even among ordinary beings some people possess a very well-formed body. So the Buddha, because he has completed all the qualities and perfections, and his karma is exceedingly pure, also has a body of superior qualities. One result of having this perfect body is that it appeals to everybody. Basically, we can say that if we persist in our practice of love and compassion, one result will be a perfect body in the future.

Then there are qualities of the Buddha's speech, of which are three:

1. being beyond all questions
2. being always applicable to the student's mind
3. cutting the delusions at the root.

The quality of being beyond all questions is based on two features of the Buddha's mind: the quality of *dharani* and the quality of confidence. The quality of *dharani* is a quality of comprehension, meaning that the Buddha instantaneously comprehends the meaning and context of the question that he is asked, fully. The power of confidence relates to a specific power where he can unobstructedly answer the question, according to the disciple's mind, without any obstruction of language and so forth. In such a way the Buddha can clear away doubts in the minds of different disciples simultaneously, without needing a translator.

He can simultaneously teach according to the different levels of the disciples' levels of mind.

As to the quality of cutting the afflictions at the root, there's not much one needs to say about this. The teachings of the Buddha explain the antidotes for eradicating the afflictions at the root.

Do you have a question?

Question: Could you explain again about having statues of

Buddha in the home? What provides peace in the home from a Buddha statue?

Answer: Some people, even non-Buddhists, like to place a Buddha statue in their home because, even despite being a non-Buddhist, they find it conducive to have a Buddha statue in their home. That's all!

Same student: Would it always have the same effect?

Answer: That might depend on the individual's state of mind. Sometimes, the strength of the blessing that one receives depends on the individual's mind. The qualities of the Buddha's mind comprise the qualities of love and of knowledge. The Buddha's mind is under the control of love and compassion, similar to the way our mind is under the control of the mental afflictions. Our mind is under the control of the mental afflictions and we involuntarily then act on them. These mental afflictions arise very easily. It is like that with love and compassion in the Buddha's mind. The Buddha's mind is constantly pervaded by love and compassion, and his mind is all the time under the control of love and compassion.

Of course, we don't have the actual experience, but even on our level we can see that the more we meditate on love and compassion, the easier love and compassion arises in different situations in our day-to-day life. When one is enlightened and one has completed one's training, one's mind will be wholly pervaded by love and compassion.

The Buddha is able to comprehend all objects of knowledge, both those belonging to the world of multiplicity and those belonging to the world of suchness – simultaneously, as clearly as if he were holding them in his hand. In our case, we can only comprehend a very tiny amount of our objects of knowledge at one time.

If we use an analogy, the Buddha comprehends all objects of knowledge as clearly as if they were a piece of fruit or a nut in the palm of his hand. When we see a nut in our hand, we can see it very clearly, as too can a person standing opposite us. However, even if a nut or piece of fruit is lying in the palm of our hand, we can only see fruit from one perspective. We cannot see it from below, but only the visible side that is facing us. If one were a Buddha, one would be able to see the whole fruit, including the underneath part.

The Buddha's mind is unstained by dualistic perception. Our perception is stained by dualistic appearance, but the Buddha's mind is unstained by dualistic appearance. Also, the Buddha perceives everything directly. For us, for example when there is a wall between us and another person, we cannot see the other person, but the Buddha perceives everything directly.

As was explained earlier, turn the mind inwards and place it single-pointedly on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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