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# The Condensed Lam Rim

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Through meditation, our mental afflictions lessen. Hence the saying, 'having fewer afflictions through the force of meditation'. When we have fewer afflictions our mental happiness increases correspondingly. With fewer afflictions as a result of our meditation, our mind will be happier and clearer.

Those who meditate on a mind that is free from anger will have less anger, and therefore will not experience the problems that an angry mind usually brings. Likewise, if we meditate on a mind free from attachment, our mind will have less attachment and we will experience fewer problems brought about by attachment. If we are well-acquainted with a mental state free from jealousy, naturally we will be less jealous and will not experience the problems that jealousy brings.

Our meditation should counteract the afflictions. If we look at meditation in this way, we can understand how meditation counteracts the mental afflictions by generating mental states that oppose the mental afflictions. The more one meditates on these positive mental states, the fewer afflictions one will have.

If we do not counteract an affliction, it will just dwell within the mind. We can customise our meditation to counteract particular mental problems and afflictions.

We will meditate for a little while, sitting comfortably in a good posture, and focusing the mind internally in a gentle manner. After having completely focused the mind internally and stopping engaging external objects, we place the mind single-pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. Placing the mind in this internal state in a relaxed manner will generate a specific type of mental happiness. We can meditate in this manner for a few minutes (*Pause for meditation*)

## 4.2.2.1.1 The actual way of taking 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 in going for refuge

Last time, we completed the first point of going for refuge, which is knowing the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and we started on the second outline of going for refuge by knowing the individual distinctions between the three objects of refuge. Under this are six outlines, and today we come to the **distinction of wish**, having already discussed the

distinction of definition and the distinction of enlightened activity.

Here, the wish or type of mindset we should have with regard to the three jewels is praise for the Buddha jewel, the wish to attain the Dharma jewel, and going for refuge to the Sangha jewel by viewing them as our support.

Then comes the **distinction of practice**. The practice with regard to the Buddha jewel is relying on the Buddha jewel by following his teachings and praising the Buddha jewel. The Dharma jewel is that which one meditates upon and which one practises, and the Sangha jewel are those whom one takes as one's companions in listening to the teachings, practising the Dharma and sharing one's livelihood.

Next is the **distinction of increasing one's merits**. One's merits increase in relation to the Buddha, as a person, to the Sangha as a group of people, or to something non-sentient like the Dharma. By relying on the Buddha as one person, one increases one's merits, or by relying on the Sangha – a group of four ordained practitioners, which is regarded as very special – one's merits increase and also in relation to the Dharma (which is non-sentient), one's merits increase.

**Then comes the third point** of going for refuge by acceptance of the three jewels. This means we accept the Buddha as the teacher, the Dharma as the truth of cessation and the truth of the path and as that which definitely liberates one from suffering, and the Sangha as our definite support, our example or inspiration in our Dharma practice.

**The fourth point** is going for refuge by exclusion, meaning one goes exclusively for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. This comes about after having reflected on the qualities, distinctions, characteristics and benefits of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

The reason why we can go for refuge to the Buddha exclusively is because the Buddha is a person who has purified all faults and developed all qualities. Somebody who has developed all qualities and is free from all faults is a valid refuge – establishing the Buddha as a valid refuge is a point that comes later. By recognising this quality of the Buddha, we can have confidence that we can go exclusively for refuge to the Buddha.

We can go for refuge exclusively to the Dharma as our teachings because they are the teachings that possess six characteristics. (1) They were taught by the Buddha, who is also called Gone to Bliss, which indicates that the Buddhist path is a blissful path liberating from suffering. (2) The Dharma liberates from cyclic existence; (3) It purifies the afflictions; (4) It does not deceive those wishing for liberation; (5) It is singularly virtuous and (6) purifies faults.

Because the Dharma has these six characteristics we can take the Dharma solely as our refuge.

We can go exclusively to the Sangha as a refuge to support us because the Sangha are those practitioners who have realised in their mental continuum the Dharma refuge that was taught by the Buddha.

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We have completed the outlines of the objects of refuge, the causes for going for refuge, and the way of going for refuge.

Next comes the outline explaining the advice of what to practise when one goes for refuge, because just going for refuge by itself is not enough. One needs to then also practise certain things, adopt certain things and reject certain things.

The advice that comes with going for refuge comes under two headings:

- the individual advice relative to the individual jewels: the individual refuges of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and
- the common advice that applies to all three equally.

The advice relating to the individual refuges comes under two headings:

- that which has to be rejected, and
- that which is to be adopted.

What is to be rejected and what is to be adopted are those actions that are unsuitable when one goes for refuge and those that are suitable. Inappropriate actions need to be rejected, while one should adopt those actions that are appropriate with going for refuge.

By reflecting on the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we will generate faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Then our faith will not just be a faith that we proclaim verbally, but will be actual faith that is in our mind. It will not be faith that arises without reason, a blind faith, but it will be a faith that we establish by thinking about the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Initially, we think about the Buddha and what qualities are needed to become a proper, qualified refuge. We then generate faith in the Dharma by contemplating the qualities of the Dharma that was taught by the Buddha, and what qualities would be necessary for a Dharma to be definitely liberating. Then we contemplate the qualities of the Sangha, those practitioners who have generated the Dharma in their minds. In this way, we generate faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, with understanding and wisdom.

The Buddha himself was not enlightened from the beginning, but was initially an ordinary person just like us. Then he started to practise the path and started to take refuge into the Buddha jewel and the Dharma that was taught by the Buddha and the Sangha. Like us, he relied on the three refuges, then progressed along the path and over time became an enlightened being himself. In the same way that the Buddha was able to become enlightened, we too have the ability to progress along the path.

Do have questions for tonight?

*Question: Earlier you said if you meditate on the wrong side that will worsen the mental afflictions. Would you like to elaborate on what that means?*

*Answer:* If, instead of meditating on the antidote of the afflictions, you meditate on the afflictions, the afflictions become stronger.

*(Questioner continues: What if you have anger, do you meditate on anger looking at it from the opposite side?)*

*Translator: You mean like analysing the anger?*

*Questioner: (Yes)*

*Answer (cont.):* Analysing the nature and function of anger also helps us overcome the anger – investigating how anger arises in the mind, how it increases, how it disturbs the mind, and how it becomes like a fire that burns in one’s mind, causing suffering. Investigating all these things helps to lessen the anger in one’s mind. Contemplating the faults of anger – how it can disturb the mind to the point where one is willing to kill the other person – helps one to overcome it.

For example, if we were so angry that we were willing to kill another person, reflecting on the suffering consequences that would immediately result – such as having to go to prison – would have an immediate pacifying effect on our anger. Anger has the power to severely disturb the mind. It happens quite often that someone kills another person out of anger, then reaches the point where they have to go to prison, but because they cannot face going to prison they kill themselves. This type of situation basically comes about because of anger.

The faults of our own anger are not always obvious, but we can clearly observe the faults of anger in the lives of other people. We should apply these observations to ourselves because if we let our mind fall under the control of anger, it is likely that we will also act in the same way.

It often happens that while the faults of the other person’s anger are obvious to us, we are oblivious to the faults of our own anger. This leads to the situation where students sometimes come to me and complain about the strong anger of their partner. Usually, I tell them: “The way it works is that first you look at your own anger and what you are doing, then you can look at the faults of the other person’s anger”.

*Question: Do you think that anger leads to depression? If you are angry but you're not inclined to kill somebody, can it lead to depression?*

*Answer:* Normally, if someone is angry, they feel very brave at that moment. Your question is often asked by people who misunderstand the practice of patience. They think that patience means to repress one’s anger, so they advise other people not to meditate on patience – not understanding that patience is actually a mind that is free from anger. To practise patience does not mean to repress one’s anger, but it means not to have any anger.

When we talk about patience or forbearance, it means is that the mind is not affected by the harm, it can bear the harm; there is no agitation or anger in a patient mind. It’s important not to have anger.

As was explained initially, turn the mind inwards and place it on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA  
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