
The Condensed Lam Rim

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We can meditate for a little bit as usual. To meditate successfully it is important to look at one's mind and one identifies the way the mind works. All kinds of appearances arise in the mind. These appearances arise not in the person but in the mind. The person is distinct from their mind. If, for example, one sees some attractive form this form appears as attractive to the mind. That appearance is in the mind; it is not in the person. The mind is where all the different appearances arise, which can be both harmful as well as positive.

One can classify the appearances that arise within one's mind into harmful and positive. When one analyses the different harmful appearances that arise in the mind some of those belong to the family of anger. If one analyses the nature of those appearances one can say that they are incredibly harmful. They create lots of harm in one's life. If one becomes more and more familiar with these types of appearances it becomes very harmful for the mind. If one becomes more and more familiar with the positive mental aspects that arise in the mind it will be more and more beneficial.

If one contemplates the nature of these harmful appearances and the problems that they create in one's life one will see that they create an infinite amount of problems. If one analyses one's mind one will find that the positive aspects that arise in the mind are conducive towards one's happiness and that the more one is familiar with them the more happiness one experiences and the more virtue one creates. The more harmful appearances one has in one's mind the more non-virtue one creates and the unhappier one's life is.

One needs to analyse the nature of the afflictions and, by slowly familiarising oneself with the way of overcoming the afflictions, it becomes very easy over time to overcome them. One should not have the feeling that one is not able to accomplish that aim. As the great Bodhisattva Shantideva said, "There is nothing that the mind cannot become familiar with". For example, initially one may not be able to stand a certain person at all. One can not bear to be together with that person for even one minute. Later one's perception may completely change and one can not bear to be separated from that person for one minute.

The perceptions of the mind are not completely fixed. The mind needs to be made familiar with the positive ways in a slow but steady manner. If one's meditation does not become the tool to lessen one's mental afflictions then one could question the value of one's meditation practice. If there is a lessening of afflictions while the mind is abiding single pointedly on the object, but meditation

does not become the antidote against the afflictions then as soon as one arises from the meditation the afflictions also arise again.

We can meditate a little bit. First sit yourself in a good posture. Then turn the mind inwards, stop engaging external objects and, after having focused the mind inwards, place it single pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. Not too tight but also not to loose. We can meditate in that 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 in going for refuge, the entrance to the Dharma

Last time we talked about the way of going for refuge. First of all the nature of going for refuge is that, after fearing the sufferings of the lower realms and cyclic existence, one has faith that the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha can rescue one from those sufferings, and completely entrust oneself to them. Having this complete faith comes from seeing that the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha can rescue one from the sufferings of the lower realms and of cyclic existence. After the way of going for refuge comes the advice that goes with going for refuge.

There is that which is to be rejected and that which is to be adopted. Initially there is the division of the advice that relates to the three jewels individually and then the advice that pertains to each of the three jewels in general. The individual advice comes in the two outlines; that which is to be adopted and that which is to be rejected.

What is to be rejected relative to the individual refuges

The things that are to be rejected are those things that are unsuitable actions that need to be stopped. The things that are to be adopted are suitable actions that one needs to practice. For example, what needs to be stopped in **relation to going for refuge to the Buddha** is that one stops going for refuge to worldly gods or to worldly types of refuge. This is from an ultimate or final point of view. one can rely on worldly refuge temporarily like on a friend, but one should not take the worldly refuge as one's final refuge.

If one is **going for refuge to the Dharma** one should abandon giving harm to sentient beings. One has to stop giving harm to sentient beings by taking refuge in the Dharma. The Buddhadharma is the Dharma of no harm and sentient beings are close to the Buddha. To give harm to sentient beings is in direct opposition to the Buddha's teachings. One can see from one's own experience that the more harmful intent one has the more difficult one's life becomes. In a relationship the more mutual, harmful intent there is the more suffering there is in that

relationship. The less harmful intent, the more love and compassion, the more happiness there is.

When one observes the sufferings of others one will generate a mind that cannot bear those sufferings, which is compassion, and one will generate a mind that wishes others to be happy, which is love.

The significance of abandoning harmful intent is very great. One can also observe the harmful effects of harmful intent in the world. One can see if there were less harmful intent in the world there would be that much more happiness and that the existence of happiness is directly related to an absence of harmful intent. One can see, very clearly, the significance of having a non-harmful attitude.

The more one practices a non harmful attitude the more one experiences happiness. If one does not say the harmful words that are on one's mind or if one does not express a frown that is on one's mind that is dharma practice; that is a practice of non harmfulness. The more one practices that; the more compassion one has and the more of a non harmful attitude one has, the happier one's life becomes. The more compassion one has and the more one has a non harmful attitude the more one's actions will naturally be beneficial for others.

There is a lot of suffering in relationships and the world and it is very important that one practices a non harmful attitude not only with regards to people that are very far away, but that one practices also a non harmful attitude with those that one has a daily interaction such as one's partner, one's parents, one's children, one's work colleagues and so forth. It is easy if one just practices a non-harmful attitude with those that are far away because there is no direct condition to be angered or agitated. But to ensure that one has a happy life, one also needs to practice a non-harmful attitude with those that are around oneself, with whom one has a daily contact. It is important that one specifically practices love and compassion and a non-harmful attitude with those with whom one has a daily interaction.

The advice regarding what is to be rejected in **relation to going for refuge to the Sangha jewel** is that one needs to abandon harmful friends; those that criticise the three jewels, that disrespect the three jewels and so forth. That does not mean that one does not practice love and compassion towards that person but it means that one does not conform to the negative attitude of that person. It can happen that that person puts something into one's mind, which will then continue to work away in ones mind and cause one to lose one's refuge. One does not conform with the negative attitude of others but one does conform with their positive attitudes. One should always adopt the qualities and positive attitudes of others and reject their negative attitudes. That's what it means to abandon a non-virtuous friend. In that way a person develops many qualities. Otherwise, if a person always adopts the faults of others they end up without any qualities but with many faults. Sometimes when a friend has an angry disposition it can happen that the partner adopts that disposition and also becomes angry.

Because it is very hot we can leave it here for tonight. Turn the mind inwards and place it on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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