
The Condensed Lam Rim

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16 November 2005

We can meditate for a little bit as usual. As meditation commences with a motivation one has to initially generate a good motivation. Depending on the motivation the action becomes pure or harmful. Therefore, if one has a motivation for the welfare of all sentient beings, not just for oneself, that would be very good.

It is important that one generates a good motivation that is not only concerned with the welfare of oneself but also with the welfare of others. If one does not train the mind in concern for the welfare of others, then the mind is primarily concerned with one's own happiness. If the mind is under the control of self-cherishing one finds it very difficult to bear even small problems. As soon as something goes against the wishes of self-cherishing, one gets upset. And if one has even the slightest success one does not get enough. Generally one's happiness depends on others. Any happiness that one experiences comes about relative to others. The more one can recognise the importance of others for one's happiness, the more one will automatically cease actions that harm others and that others dislike.

One's own purpose is, of course, important and one has to look after oneself. One has to protect oneself and one's mind, but one has to ask oneself what is the proper way of protecting one's mind. For example, is the proper way of protecting one's mind to practice love and compassion or to be self cherishing? With the self-cherishing mind one gets very upset immediately when something does not concur with the self-cherishing thought. If one practices love and compassion one is not so easily upset and one does not estrange oneself from one's friends. If one acts through self cherishing one usually makes oneself and one's friends upset. The more egotistical one is the more one estranges oneself from others and the more one finds it difficult to have stable and harmonious interactions with others. One should consider very carefully which states of mind really protect one's self interest and decide, single pointedly, to adopt those states of mind and to meditate on them. One can see which way one's meditation should go.

First sit yourself in a good posture. The mind needs to be focused fully on the object, which concentrates the power of one's mind. If there is only a partial focus then there is some distraction and the power of one's mind cannot be completely harnessed. We first turn the mind inwards and then place it single pointedly on the coming and going of the breath. We can meditate in that manner for a few minutes. (*Pause for meditation*)

It's important to look inside the mind because inside the

mind there are different mental states that cause problems. Therefore it is worthwhile to analyse the mind and look inside.

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

We said the other day that, in relation to going for refuge to the Sangha jewel, the practice to adopt is to view all ordained practitioners, even their robes, with the same respect as one would give the actual, definite Sangha.

In support of this it says in *Encouraging the Superior Thought*,

Look at the qualities, do not, with a dark mind,

Investigate the Faults of others.

One should not look for the faults of others like a spy. When one is looking for the faults of others one will see them and, upon having identified those faults, it will give one the feeling that one is superior to the other person. This feeling of superiority will give rise to conceit and pride and because of conceit and pride one will become reckless. For this reason if, for example, one is a higher fully ordained monk one should not look for the faults in, or criticise, a lesser monk. Should the higher Gelong belittle the lower Gelong and criticise the lower Gelong, the higher Gelong will not achieve liberation. If the higher Gelong does not practice the path correctly he will not achieve liberation while the lower Gelong can achieve liberation if he practices the path correctly.

As we said last time, one benefit of respecting the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is that one also will receive respect from others. One should try to be humble in one's interactions with others. By looking at the qualities of the three jewels one will generate more respect for them. The principle is that the more one focuses on the qualities, the stronger they will appear to one's mind. It the same is with others. If one just focuses on the faults of others the more these faults will appear to one's mind and not the person's qualities. Even if one focuses on just one tiny fault, that tiny fault will be the only thing that appears to one's mind. It will become a huge thing in one's mind.

Similarly, if one focuses on the qualities of others then they will be what appears to one's mind. One should also apply this principle to one's relations with one's parents. The more one thinks about the kindness of one's parents, the more one will generate respect for one's parents. There might, of course, be some problems but, overall, the more one remembers their kindness the more one will hold one's parents in good regard. Even if one cannot physically repay their kindness one should, at least, mentally have that state of mind.

Next comes the **general advice concerning all three jewels**. There are six outlines: (1) Going repeatedly for

refuge by being mindful of the qualities and distinctions of the three jewels; (2) Being mindful of the kindness of the three jewels and making an effort to make offerings to the three jewels including offering the first part of everything that one eats or drinks; (3) Trying, with love and compassion, to exhort others to practice in this way. (4) Whatever the action or purpose, only rely on requests to the Triple Gem after having made offerings to them, and not on any worldly method; (5) Going for refuge three times in the morning and three times in the evening. (6) Having accepted the three jewels as one's refuge one should not give them up even as a joke. One should not trivialize that refuge in any way.

We can elaborate on the six points next time. Do you have some questions tonight?

Question: Geshe-la, I was wondering if you could comment on whether prayers or mantras have the same power if they are only mentally recited.

That depends on what you mean by mental recitation. Does that refer to mental comprehension of the meaning? Ideally one has mental understanding and one verbally recites what one mentally understands. If one just recites something verbally it is not as useful. Mere verbal recitation has, of course, a certain benefit but Shantideva said if one recites verbally with mental understanding and a well concentrated mind that is the best. If the mind wanders the verbal recitation loses its power. Even if one doesn't have a great mental understanding but one recites the mantra verbally with good concentration it will still have a certain power. In any case the mere, verbal recitation has the benefit of purifying idle gossip.

Question: Geshe-la, in my job as a carpenter, I often come across situations where there is a nest of insects and in doing my job I know that many insects will die. Although I purify, I know it will happen again. Could you comment on this please?

The general principle is that when one has generated non-virtuous karma one needs to purify that non-virtuous karma. But one should not think, "Oh, it's ok to create the action because I can always purify it". It is very difficult to live a pure life without any non-virtuous karma. Inevitably in the process of living one usually creates non-virtuous karma because one has many needs. But to have the approach, "Oh, it's alright to do a non-virtuous action because I can purify it" is a mistaken approach because death might catch up with you before you are able to purify the action. Often we say, "Oh, I was planning to do that" but one missed the opportunity and one can't do what one planned to do. Do not do the negative action even if you think that you can purify it later because there is no certainty that one will have the time to purify it.

Question. If you spill drinks and things on your practices as I have done, what's the best thing to do?

You need to clean it up. If you don't clean it up then it would be disrespectful to the three jewels. Sometimes people also purify the action by reciting the mantra OM AH HUM, OM AH HUM, OM AH HUM.

For example, if one spills something on one's shirt or

one's clothes one is very careful to clean it thoroughly and one gets quite upset for having spoiled one's shirt and so forth. But that is not really anything of great significance but you know the written Dharma is something quite significant.

Question: Can you explain the meaning of lapis lazuli light?

It refers to blue light; the colour of the sky, for example. It is said that one side of Mount Meru is made out of lapis lazuli. The sun reflects off that lapis lazuli and that's why we have a blue sky (laughter). Anyway, you know that the lapis lazuli of Mount Meru is a hidden phenomenon that even scientists have not been able to discover yet! In one of the South East Asian countries, Thailand or Sri Lanka, there is a Buddha statue made out of lapis lazuli.

Question: If you commit an act when you are dreaming, does that result in a karmic imprint?

There is a lot to be said with regards to the karma of dreams. Generally the karma created during dreams is regarded as karma that is created but not accumulated because there is no intention. Because there is no motivation, there cannot be any actual motivation of killing during a dream, it is karma that is created but not accumulated.

Sometimes the karmic imprints that one accumulates during the day can have an effect on one's dream. Sometimes the karmic imprints from past lives effect dreams.

It is similar to hitting somebody with a stick by mistake without having the motivation of hurting him or her. That would be karma that is created but not accumulated. Also if, for example, in the course of one's daily activities one kills insects and so forth that would be karma that is created but not accumulated

Question: Thinking about unintentionally killing insects, is there some thing you can do for the insects that you kill?

Yes, there are prayers than one can do and mantras that one can do. For somebody who doesn't accept karma all of this might seem very strange. To say, for example, "don't kill the mosquito" seems strange because they will think, "Oh, here I have something that harms me so why should I not be allowed to kill it". Sometimes when parents don't accept the dharma it might be skilful of a child not to push these kinds of points on the parents because they won't be able to accept it. They will say, "That sounds very crazy to me; not to harm something that harms me." It is the worldly view to retaliate upon harm. Since this view is very prevalent it might be difficult to accept the teachings on karma.

Question: Can you explain what it means to say karma is created but not accumulated?

To accumulate karma depends on the motivation; you need to have the motivation. You can have karma that is not acted out but is still accumulated. In the same way, you can have karma that is acted out but wasn't accumulated. If, for example, you throw a stone and then mistakenly hit somebody that would be karmic as there was an action. But you wouldn't accumulate non-virtuous karma because there was not really any intent of

hitting somebody. One needs to look at the distinction between the motivation and the action. If you intend to harm somebody, you accumulate karma even though you might not engage in the action.

Question: I live where a cat is killing other animals but I don't want to catch the cat because it will be killed. What should I do about this? Is it the lesser of two evils to kill the cat?

Generally the lifestyle of a cat involves lots of non-virtue but to say I am going to kill the cat to prevent the cat from creating non-virtue is a little bit difficult. It is very difficult to have a really pure motivation for that kind of action. Even though there are precedents from the life stories of the Buddha that is a very difficult thing to do because it's very difficult to have the pure motivation. One can say, of course, "If the cat gets killed it will not accumulate the karma of killing so many mice", but that's a little bit difficult.

There is the story from the life stories of the Buddha where, in one of his previous lifetimes, the Buddha was traveling on a ship and he came to know that the captain was planning to kill the five hundred traders that were on the boat. Therefore, out of great compassion, seeing that the captain was about to engage in a huge, non-virtuous activity, creating suffering for himself and others the Buddha killed the captain. In this way, out of great compassion, he prevented the captain from creating the non-virtuous karma and saved the traders. Because the action was based on great compassion the Buddha accumulated vast amounts of merit. Generally it is desirable that where it is certain that people will engage in further harmful actions to keep them in prison where they can't engage in those actions.

As was explained earlier, turn the mind inwards and recite the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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Edited Version

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