

Four Reminders / Thoughts That Turn the Mind to the Dharma

Suffering of Samsara

Samsara is a habit of mind that keeps the wheel of suffering turning. Samsara is the biggest trickster as I think I'm getting ahead, yet my suffering mind is stuck spinning round in the slime and muck of kleshas, confused views, and destructive habits. Suffering is pervasive as I don't consider craving pleasure and averting pain as suffering. The more stuck I am, the faster and stronger I need to grasp, avoid, spin storylines, project out, and hide in delusion. This creates an illusory reality of conceptual and projective security in which I cocoon. Treading the path of virtue and meditation I will free myself from the cycle of suffering by clarifying the middle way view and overcoming destructive emotions through mindfulness and loving-kindness.

Death and Impermanence

Death is real and impermanence is constant. Like sand slipping through my fingers, there is nothing I can permanently hold onto for security. Life is as transitory as a flash of lightning and as fragile as a bubble about to burst. This body will become a corpse. Everyone I love will die, everything I own will be lost, everything I believe in and care about will be forgotten. The five elements eventually destroy everything. What I take as real and permanent is just a momentary appearance that does not last. Nothing lasts, this moment, thoughts or emotions, nor even the earth and sun. Now, I take to heart the truth of death and impermanence.

Karma

The law of the cosmos is causality - each cause has an effect and that effect becomes the basis of another cause. Whether simple or complex, cause and effect is ever present. My choices and actions of body, speech, and mind have consequences. Like ripples in a pond, each action reverberates through space and time. Our future actions are not yet determined, but our past actions follow us like a shadow. I cannot completely undo the past, but I have an influence over the present and the future. Taking responsibility for my body, speech, and mind, each moment I have a new choice. Following my values, I will abandon non-virtue and devote myself to virtuous actions.

Precious Life & Opportunity

Of all the interdependent factors that have come together including the earth and sun, generations upon generations of my family, and the auspicious connections and events of my life until this moment, I am alive and have discovered the Dharma. Right now, I have a precious life and opportunity that is free and well favored. With my truest friend, the Dharma, I can transform my confusion into wisdom, liberating myself from the illusion of samsara. I will devote myself to realizing my precious life and the wonderful opportunity to wake up this moment.