Study Group - "Liberation *in the* Palm *of* Your Hand" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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৩৩ অমাইমারুমার্লীআঅবাবেডেম।



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Try to reinforce your motivation by thinking that listening to these teachings will strengthen your practice to achieve Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings.

422.122.22: The Benefits Of The Ripening Qualities (cont.)

Last week in our discussions we mentioned that to merely achieve an ordinary human life in the future is not enough. We need to achieve a special life which is qualified with the ripened qualities that make that life fully suitable for the practice of dharma. We then listed the eight ripened qualities and began to focus on the benefits of each one of them. We have finished the first four.

5. Excellent quality of speech - literally "gentle speech"

ळेग'गर्ड्र व'या

This is being able to communicate with others in the most skilful way. The result is that other people develop trust in one's speech. Because of your great skill in communicating with others whatever you say accords with their needs. Whatever you say is very honest and truthful, with no hint of suspicion or deception. Therefore the listener believes in and trusts your speech. This skilful speech is an advantage since people will assemble to listen to your dharma teachings.

It is also said this ripened quality of gentle speech indicates the last three of the four means of gathering disciples.¹

The first is giving. The second is literally "pleasant speech" which means communicating according to the needs of the listeners. The third is being truthful to one's own speech i.e., not simply saying to others but also practising the same thing as you as you say to others. [Fourth is] always practising dharma.

In this way quality of gentle speech has the quality of ripening other beings.

1 These were also mentioned in the class of nineteenth April 1994 where a slightly different way of describing them was given..In the Wisdom Publications translation the four means of gathering disciples are mentioned on page 708 as:

In some traditional texts we find these three qualities of knowledge:

- i. scholastic knowledge which enables one to be free from ignorance of dharma
- ii. perseverance which means always persevering in keeping the pure moral code through refraining from non-virtue
- iii. kindness which means always voluntarily extending benefit and help to other beings.

6. Excellent Quality Of Great Power

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Great power does not mean to be very bossy or overpowering to those under one's control. Rather two meanings are indicated here:

- i. Power in controlling the mind which enables us to help many others. To a large extent people judge others on how they live and what they have accomplished. In this context accomplishment refers to spiritual qualities. Someone with very good self control is in a good position to help others
- ii. Power arising from reputation. Having enriched yourself with great inner qualities such as generosity, to the point where you become very well known to many others because of these spiritual qualities, you become famous. Because of this fame, which you achieved by development of your own spiritual practice, you are seen as a worthy object of veneration and a source of spiritual help. People feel great gratitude to you since you are a person with full qualifications to help others.

Whether you take great power to mean great power in controlling yourself, or in the sense of your reputation for possessing spiritual qualities which help others, others are drawn to you with trust and faith, and without any force. They become more receptive to what you say.

It is just like the orders of a king or a government, which are followed without any hesitation. With this quality of great power, whatever your advice or help others will follow it.

7. Excellent Quality Of Being Male

The text says that the advantage of being male is that you can live in a crowd without fear and live alone with fewer obstacles or hindrances. This explanation specifically refers to someone who wants to live as a sangha. Having become sangha [this quality] enables one to live with more confidence and courage but face less obstacles. In brief the benefit of this quality is having more courage and fewer obstacles to practising dharma.

^{1.} Giving material things

^{2.} Speaking sweetly to the people drawn to you

^{3.} Teaching the disciples the path of the holy dharma according to their intelligence thus bringing them to train in its stages.

^{4.} Practise what you preach

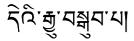
8. Excellent Quality Of Strong Mind And Body

ત્યાં શ્રેમશ ફેંવશ ૧૮ છેય. તો

The advantage of having a strong body, which is one free of any disease and is healthy, is that a great deal of hardship in practising dharma can be tolerated. Lama Tsong Khapa performed a great number of physical prostrations mainly because of the strength of his body. Therefore he was in a position to accumulate merit and practise dharma.

Mental strength means that in all circumstances great spirit, interest and joy in practising dharma is maintained. With strong mind and body one can achieve the union of calm abiding and special insight and any other clairvoyant power much faster. With a very strong mind, you can tolerate all hardships and remain very consistent with your perseverance in the practice. You will not be discouraged and lose interest by thinking that despite all past efforts you still feel that you have not achieved your goal or fulfilled the wishes of your guru. Thinking that way causes you to lose the confidence to continue the same practice in the future. With this quality of strong mind and body that will not happen. To achieve even a very mundane purpose you need a strong body and strong mental determination to succeed. So, too, this quality of strong healthy body and mind is a great advantage in making quick progress on the spiritual path.

422.122.23: The Causes To Achieve Them



Studying the eight ripened qualities we may be lead to the thought that possessing those eight qualities is certainly of real benefit. However there may be doubt about whether we shall have those eight qualities in the future. There is no need to have such doubt. Farmers sow seed now without any doubt that there will later be a harvest. Similarly if we assemble the causes for those eight qualities now, there is no doubt that we shall possess them in the future. It is like a cause of nature, in that when all the causal conditions are gathered together, the result is automatic.

At the moment we are in the most fortunate position to practise dharma and there is no better, no more suitable time to practise dharma than what we have now.

The Causes For Attaining Long Life

The causes for obtaining long life are to refrain from any action of killing other beings and to engage in actions of saving the lives of others, e.g., those beings just about to be killed. Other causes are giving food to others and helping prisoners to be free from prison.

End of discourse.

Geshe-la: What are the six perfections and the four means of gathering disciples?

Students: six perfections:

giving; morality; patience; joyful effort; concentration; wisdom four means of gathering disciples:

giving material objects; speaking sweetly; teaching dharma; live by your words

Benefits Of Sleeping In The Lion Posture

Student 1: What are the benefits of sleeping in the Lion Posture?

Geshe-la: The reason why lying on the side position with your head on your (right) hand is called the lion position is because when a lion goes to sleep in this position he does so in a very relaxed manner without any fear. When other animals see a lion sleeping they cannot go near it. Similarly sleeping in that position has the benefit of stopping bad dreams and some other obstacles to dharma practice.

That lion posture also resembles the posture in which Shakyamuni Buddha passed away so we sleep in that position to remember the life story of Lord Buddha.

Men, Women And Courage

Student 2: How can being a male bring more courage?

Geshe-la: Courage means a sense of no fear. It is said that in order to hear all the dharma teachings, the suitable listener should have no fear. This is not so much the case now, but in some cases people listen to teachings, then get scared and lose their sense of calm and relaxation. In reference to this it is said that the male body has some biological advantage.

Student 3: How does the male body have some biological advantage?

Geshe-la: Geshe-la is not sure but it is possible that now the female spirit might have developed. In earlier times there was such an obvious difference where females were so soft and gentle that they were not in a position to do certain things. This has something to do with the nature of the female mind. The nature of the female mind is more gentle and soft so there is more kindness and loving feelings. The male mind is more rough and wild. This is why men were sent to war. Of course in reality we do not know their feelings but at least outwardly they go to the front line of war. Whether this is because of bravery or not may be questionable.

Self Esteem And "Stage-Fright"

Also this has a lot to do with the quality of self esteem when giving teachings to others. You may know the subject thoroughly but without self esteem, courage or confidence you become nervous and this obstructs you from giving the teachings fully. If you think of giving a lecture to a big crowd, the fear and nervousness experienced by looking at that crowd may cause you to forget everything despite your preparation. Holding one's mind on the subject matter rather than focussing on faces of the people in the crowd will help with that problem. Otherwise you may see in the crowd a very learned person, or perhaps a person who is not right for those teachings. Rather just focus on the subject matter of your talk, and if talking about dharma then focus on your motivation. Even in monasteries there are many monks, even high scholars, who have this difficulty. Some can not even stand in front of a crowd of thousands. This is due to fear, or a lack of courage which prevents them from rising and debating in front of that big crowd. Therefore we need that quality of courage to be able to give teachings to a large number of beings.

Headings with outline numbering are derived from the Text. Headings without outline numbering are derived from Geshe Doga's commentary.

The original typescript is prepared from Alan Molloy's original transcript, which has been checked against Damien Busby's notes. Adair Bunnett then checks the typescript against a tape recording, and edits the text, which is finally checked by Alan Molloy.

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