
8. Excellent Quality Of Strong Mind And Body

ལུས་སེམས་སྒྲོབས་དང་ལྡན་པ།

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

དེའི་རྒྱ་བསྐྱབ་པ།

Studying the eight ripened qualities we may 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.

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