
Study Group - “Liberation *in the Palm of Your Hand*”
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ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅངས།

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Try to reinforce the correct motivation which is to think that the reason why I undertake this study and practice of Lam Rim, is to achieve the fully enlightened state of Buddhahood - a state that is free of all faults and possessing all qualities - for the benefit of all beings.

The Causes Of Pleasant Speech

We continue from last week's teachings on the causes of achieving the eight ripened qualities of a human rebirth. Having finished discussing the causes of the first four excellent qualities, the fifth is pleasant speech.

The primary cause to achieve pleasant speech is to abandon the four non-virtues of speech:- lying, divisive speech, harsh speech and idle gossip - and to adopt the practice of always speaking very pleasantly to others.

As we have previously discussed in detail the shortcomings of the four non-virtues of speech we shall not repeat them. Speaking pleasantly is in the context of spiritual values or Dharma, and refers to the skill of communicating Dharma teachings to others.

It is always very important to have the right motivation when giving teachings to others. The right motivation is not a selfish one but is to help others through our communication. At the same time it is important to have a smile on your face, because that is very pleasant to others. The language used in giving teachings should be very suitable not only in terms of the content being suitable to the listener, but also in terms of the selection of words. A polite and gentle vocabulary has more positive effect on the listener.

In order to have such qualities of speech we must create a special cause. For example two people may teach the same topic, but the listener gets a different taste and feeling from each. For the listener to get a positive feeling from your teaching you must have some special qualities and skills in your speech. If you are giving a Dharma talk such as on Monday nights, you should remember this and make sure you have the right motivation. Lama Tsong Khapa always emphasised that while giving Dharma your facial appearance should be pleasing, maintaining a smile, and your speech very gentle. Even if people ask very cynical or sceptical questions you should not get upset, but maintain a clear mind and provide the most suitable answer for that person.

The skill of pleasant speech is also important in day-to-day life, where good communication skills can improve your interactions with others, as well as influence more people.

Therefore we must always remember the importance of pleasant speech. The most important thing is to put it into practice in our daily life, both in spiritual practice and in daily affairs.

Pleasant Speech And The Four Means Of Gathering Disciples

Last week we said pleasant speech comprises the last three of the four means of gathering disciples. The first means of gathering disciples is giving of material objects.

The second is pleasant and gentle speech which implies skill in teaching or giving Dharma to others in terms of language and effective communication.

The third is teaching according to the need of others. It is not enough to simply have all the skills of teaching, and communicating with others, because we must be able to relate what we are teaching to their needs, interests and predispositions.

The fourth is practising what you teach to others. Think for example of encouraging children not to drink alcohol. Firstly the parents must stop drinking to set an example, otherwise their advice will not have much influence on the children. Similarly, if we live and abide by the Dharma teaching which we give to others, then this will have more impact and provide encouragement for others to follow that teaching.

The Causes Of Great Power

Sixth are the causes to have great power. The cause of this is to show great respect to your teachers, masters, parents and those who are older or more senior. Another cause is making an effort to obtain positive qualities, and generating prayers wishing to have them in the future. These are said to be the cause to accomplish great power.

The Cause To Be Reborn As A Male

The seventh ripened quality is to be reborn as a male. This quality was discussed at length earlier. It by no means discriminates against females or despises women. In this context there are some clear explanations as to

why there are some advantages in being born as a man. To achieve this quality the cause is to wish to be male in a future life, and to have the qualities of a male.

In Buddhism there is no sexual discrimination. This is apparent if you refer to other sources and especially to the qualities of Lord Buddha himself who fully generated an unbiased attitude of compassion, with no feeling of liking some but not liking others. He had the same attitude to all beings. Within the tantric teachings, one root tantric vow is not to despise women. You completely break that root tantric vow if you despise women. Women have an essential role in accomplishing the ultimate goal of tantra. In the Vinaya (or moral codes) of Buddha, there four main types of attendants are mentioned - novice monks and nuns, and fully ordained monks and nuns. The Heart Sutra refers to sons and daughters of family or race of Buddha. It shows that both men and women can actualise the path of seeing which is direct realisation of the ultimate truth.

There is no discrimination to be found in other sources. If you think there is some discrimination, that is misinterpretation.

The Cause Of Powerful Mind And Body

The cause of having the quality of powerful mind and body are voluntarily helping others by undertaking tasks which no one else could be capable of even thinking to do let alone actually performing the deed itself. If such a help cannot be provided single handedly, it can be done with the aid of others. Another cause to have powerful mind and body is to preventing harm in any form to others e.g. hitting, harming or injury and freely giving food etc. to others.

This finishes the eight ripened qualities, knowing the benefits of each, and the causes to attain them.

The Seven Qualities Of Higher Status

Beside the eight ripened qualities, there are also seven qualities of higher status or rebirth which we come across in other texts. Some are the same as in the eight ripened qualities. They are:

1. Good race
2. Attractive body
3. Long life
4. No sickness
5. Pleasant speech
6. Wealth
7. Wisdom knowledge.

Apart from wisdom knowledge, the other six are contained in the eight ripened qualities. Therefore the causes of these six are no different from those six ripened qualities.

Wisdom knowledge refers to the right sense of

discrimination. The Abhidharma says without this wisdom knowledge there is no means to overcome mental delusion.

One of these seven qualities of higher status is wealth which is literally power or freedom. This is having opportunity in terms of both Dharma and daily life. You have the good fortune to be able to practise Dharma if you wish, as well as enjoying a good worldly life. The causes to achieve this quality of power or freedom is not being jealous of those with more wealth, education, etc.; not being competitive with equals in terms of wealth and so on; and not having a sense of superiority towards those who have less wealth, power etc.

This is all for tonight. Now Geshela requests some people to get the tea while the others recite the Twenty-one Taras prayer. Then everyone will stand up and shake hands and ask people "How are you?", with a smile.

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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