
calms down. There are many other benefits experienced by different individuals. Some experience the mind calming down and experience a rest from the very agitated mind. If one is normally in the habit of thinking a lot one notices that one's mind is very busy and by focusing on the breath one finds that the mind takes a break and feels restful. Others may also feel the mind becoming more calm and settled and others may notice the mind becoming clearer. There are many benefits one could find just from focusing on the breath itself. In this way there are great benefits to achieve. Even a few minutes done sincerely with full attention can give effects that we can experience. We will now spend a few minutes focusing on our breath.

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. Developing the faith of conviction in karma and its effects.

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1.3. The way one engages in virtue

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1.3.2. The way to train by means of the four powers

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1.3.2.3. The four powers

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1.3.2.3.2. The power of the opponent force

Following on from the earlier explanations of the text we have come to the explanation of the means for purification that is done through cultivating the four opponent powers. We have come to the point where the text explains when a purification practice has been done how the negative karma is purified and the manner in which it is purified.

Depending on the strength of the purification practice there are different ways in which the purification is experienced. If, for example, a very heavy negative karma had been created which would result in great suffering in unfortunate rebirths then, through purification, the suffering experienced in an unfortunate rebirth would be lessened. Even if one were to be reborn in the lower realms the suffering that one experienced would be minimised. In other instances the purification practices can result in not having to experience the sufferings of the lower realms. Even if one is reborn in the lower realms one will not have to experience the actual sufferings of the lower realms.

In other instances the purification practices may occur when one has illnesses such as a headache. Having a mere headache now may be a means to purify negative karma which would otherwise have to be experienced in an unfortunate rebirth in the next lifetime. In yet other instances negative karma that is to result in experiencing suffering for a long duration of time in the future may be shortened. If one has to suffer in the future rebirth it will be shortened. In other examples of strong purification

practices it can actually purify the negative karma so one will not have to experience the result at all.

As described earlier there is no certainty that the negative karma can be removed as it depends on whether the purifier is of greater or lesser strength or whether the remedy is one that has greater or lesser strength. The purifier of greater or lesser strength refers particularly to how the purifier engages in the practice of purification. If the purifier engages in the practice of purification by leading a life of ethics and they absorb their ethics well then the purification is said to be of great strength.

The text then explains that even definite karma, a karma where the one who creates it will definitely experience the result, can be purified through purification practices. In regards to that explanation the text goes into what we call a doubt that is raised by some in relation to a statement in a sutra. This sutra says that karma does not perish, even in one hundred aeons. This sutra says that once karma is created its results will definitely be experienced, even if a hundred aeons goes by. This is explained in detail in the sutra where it says that karma is not like other material objects such as seedlings and so forth that may lose the potency and ability to produce a result. After a certain time the potential to sprout and grow may be lost. Likewise other material objects lose the ability to produce a result after a certain time. However karma is not like that. Once karma has been created, even if a long duration of time has passed by, the conditions are intact and at a certain time that karmic imprint in the mind will be activated and experienced.

Having raised this doubt in relation to the statement in the sutra Lama Tsong Khapa explains that what is being explained in the sutra in that quote is that once created karma does not perish even in one hundred aeons and if it is not remedied through the purification of the four opponent powers it will definitely be experienced. That is the meaning of karma not perishing in even a hundred aeons. This quote from the sutra should be understood in its context. It does not mean that karma under any circumstances will definitely be experienced. It refers specifically to karma that has not been remedied. When the four opponent powers have not been applied it will definitely be experienced. Otherwise it can be purified.

When the four opponent powers have been applied as a remedy for purification they will definitely become a remedy. The result of that particular negative karma will not be experienced. The purification process serves as a means to nullify the potential for the karma to ripen. In other words, it is affecting the potential to create a result. The potential that is left upon our mind. The imprint on our mind does not have the potency to bring about a result. In that way purification becomes a remedy towards overcoming the negative consequences to be experienced.

Just as that is true for the negative karma one can also interpret from the teaching the potential for positive karma to also be nullified through negative states of mind such as anger. It is said that the moments of anger that we experience destroy the potential that we have created for positive karma to bring about a result. That is also true for negative karma.

What we need to understand from the explanation of the teachings is that because negative karma can be purified we need to apply the four opponent powers in a purification practice so we can prevent the negative consequences of negative karma from being experienced. We apply the remedy in that way. When we create positive karma we need to secure the potential of that positive karma so that it does not become destroyed. It is said that we need to dedicate the positive karma that we have created and the dedication practice secures the positive potential in our mind.

The teaching goes on to explain that even though negative karma can be purified it is better if one were not to engage in negative karma from the beginning. There is a big difference in relation to the experience that someone has from having purified negative karma versus someone who has not created negative karma in the beginning. The analogy given to illustrate that is the instance of someone who breaks a leg and it heals later. Even though a broken leg can be healed there is a difference between someone who has broken their leg and it has been healed versus someone who has not broken their leg at all. Just because a broken leg can be healed it does not mean that after it has been healed it is the same as someone who has not broken their leg at all. In instances such as running or walking someone who has broken their leg would not be able to walk as fast or stably as they would have in the past. Someone who hadn't broken his or her leg would, in that case, be better.

The teaching further explains the negative consequences of someone who has created negative karma, especially in relation to having broken vows. After having taken certain vows if one breaks those vows it is said that even though those vows can be retaken and the negative karma can be purified to a certain extent the fact of having broken the vows would prolong the realisations or attainments one can achieve through one's practice. It takes much, much longer to achieve the realisations and attainments if one has broken vows.

The text quotes from different sutras in explaining how one who has broken certain vows will need to practise for a long time and will find it very difficult to achieve the realisations. The explanations given here clarify a point. The main point is that having understood the teaching where it says negative karma can be purified through a purification practice of applying the four opponent powers one may become complacent in one's practice. One may think, 'Oh, now that I have learned and understand how to purify negative karma it will be fine if I do something wrong and engage in negative karma. It will be O.K. because I can purify it.' That state of mind may arise so the teaching points out here that just because negative karma can be purified that should not become leeway for one to engage in negative karma. If one does create negative karma, particularly in relation to breaking vows and so forth, there will still be negative consequences of prolonging one's attainments and realisations so one must be careful.

After having quoted from the sutras to make this point, Lama Tsong Khapa concluded by saying that when the sutras and so forth explain that negative karma can be

purified it is explaining the fact that the potential for that negative karma is nullified. One does not experience the negative consequences of that particular karma but one must always remember the fact that realisations and attainments will be prolonged and will be much harder to achieve and one should limit and avoid creating negative karma.

Lama Tsong Khapa further stresses the point by saying that other teachings indicate the bodhisattva's practice involves not creating even the smallest negative karma. Bodhisattvas would rather give up their life than allow themselves to create even the tiniest, smallest negative karma intentionally. Bodhisattvas will avoid by all means, even at the cost of their lives, creating negative karma. This indicates that there is definitely a great purpose in not engaging in negative karma. Bodhisattvas would definitely know how, and have skilful means, to purify negative karma. The fact that they avoid creating negative karma, even at the cost of their lives, shows that there is a difference between negative karma that has not been created at all from the beginning versus negative karma that has been created but purified. If that were not the case then bodhisattvas would not apply such great measures to avoid creating negative karma. Lama Tsong Khapa then mentions here what I have mentioned earlier - that there is a difference between someone who has broken their leg and fixed it and someone who has not broken their leg at all. We can conclude the explanation from the text for this evening and leave some time for questions, if there are any.

Question: How does one develop bodhicitta properly?

Since your question involved 'properly', the proper way to develop bodhicitta would be to first develop renunciation in relation to oneself. Renunciation means developing a clear understanding of the faults of samsara, cyclic existence and thus developing a very keen, very strong determination to overcome the shortcomings of samsara and to be free from the sufferings of samsara. When a desire to be free from samsara is felt very strongly within oneself one can use that strong feeling that one has developed in oneself. When one focuses on that and has that wish for others as well then one has developed a basis for developing bodhicitta.

There is a process in first developing renunciation for oneself and then how that contributes to developing bodhicitta. When one sees the faults of samsara very clearly and develops a determination to be free from the shortcomings and faults of the worldly existence or samsara and that determination becomes very strong within oneself that determination turns into a state of mind where one sees the possibility, one develops a certainty, that one will be able to do that. When one develops a certainty of being able to free oneself from samsara one then focuses on others and thinks about how other sentient beings have been kind to oneself and how one should not ignore or leave others behind. One then develops a strong concern for other sentient beings. With the strong certainty that one has developed the possibility of achieving liberation for oneself then, based on one's sense of concern and then love and compassion for

others, one will develop the same certainty that it will also be possible for other sentient beings. Bodhicitta mind can be developed in that process.

Actually the text that we are studying here, the Lam Rim, is a process, the whole technique, to eventually develop the bodhicitta mind and thus practise after having developed that mind. The text itself is divided into trainings or practices for the three different levels of capacities of beings. It is divided into the three scopes, the small scope, the medium scope and great scope. The text what we have covered so far is the practises of the small scope. From the next session onwards we will be covering the teachings and the trainings for the medium scope that will then lead on to the trainings of the great scope.

This is a very systematic way of how to progress along the path. In the small scope that we have been covering so far the teachings are mainly explaining ways of avoiding the ten non-virtues and creating the ten positive virtues and, in that way, creating the causes for achieving a good rebirth in the next lifetime, such as rebirth as a human or in the special god realms. After having trained oneself to avoid and purify negative karmas and cultivate positive karmas one creates the causes for good rebirth in a future lifetime.

As we progress in the training and come to the trainings of the medium scope we come to realise that just achieving a good rebirth in the next lifetime as a human or even as a worldly god will not be sufficient. One will still be in the cycle of samsara and that will not be sufficient to achieve a good result for oneself. One will still have to go through the different types of sufferings. When one comes to realise and fully understand this the training leads us into how to develop, as mentioned earlier, a sense of renunciation. From that renunciation a complete disgust for the shortcomings and faults of samsara is developed and this develops the determination to be free and achieve liberation. When that attitude has been developed then, based on that, one can train in the great scope where we focus on other sentient beings.

Before we conclude for the evening we will spend a few minutes in meditation and, as previously, we will sit in a relaxed upright posture and bringing our mind inward. Distancing our mind from the distractions we try to bring our mind inward and this time we focus on the name mantra of Buddha Shakyamuni.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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