

Chapter 16 The Attitude of a Person of Small Scope

Matches a) in Chapter 9. Second part of 1) Training the mind in the stages of the path shared with persons of Small Scope

three levels of spiritual beings: the person of small scope, the person of intermediate scope, and the person of great scope

b) The measure of the attitude of a person of small spiritual scope

"What can I do to protect myself from birth in those suffering realms?" The answer is to take refuge in the Three Jewels which teach you the necessary tools and skills

When concern for what will happen in your next life spontaneously and naturally dominates your thoughts and actions, then you are on the path of the person of small scope.

You were brought to this life by previous karma, and now that karma has ripened; there isn't very much you can do to change it. This is the time to turn your attention to your future life, because that is something you really can control.

You need to take the right steps now!

Even when that spiritual attitude takes hold in your mind; you have to stabilise it. You have to continuously apply yourself to diligent practice in order to maintain this thought; otherwise you may lose it again.

You reach this first plateau on the path to enlightenment when this change in your scope becomes the fundamental motivating force in your life; not just mere words.

c) Clearing up misconceptions concerning the attitude of a person of small spiritual scope

Need for excellent body, wealth, intelligence, good companions

You have to spend many lifetimes training the mind, accumulating virtuous causes, and eliminating obstacles. In each of those lives it is important to have good conditions for practice.

You need an excellent body, resources, companionship, surroundings in a string of continuous rebirths

These worldly advantages actually enable you to pursue the path with freedom and diligence

Six perfections

First four (giving, ethical conduct, patience, preserving effort) are necessary for good rebirths and are also attributes of a buddha

The last two (concentration and wisdom) result in the 'truth body' on a buddha whose nature is perfect knowledge and freedom from all obscurations.

Pure Ethical Conduct and Vows

The preeminent cause for such an excellent body is pure ethical conduct. Ie, ethical conduct is the root of the path. Ethical conduct is the foundation of all good qualities.

You should take vows to the extent you are able and protect those vows as best you can.

You may need a minimum of the prātimokṣa vows of the fully ordained monk or nun. You may add the bodhisattva vows

Conclusion for Small Scope

You should try as hard as you can to contemplate and meditate on these points. This will create a solid foundation for all other practices, and will be very useful to you in this life and throughout all future lives. If you put your effort into this, it will make your time here much more meaningful and beneficial